Teacher autonomy : a review of the research literature

Jaime A. Usma-Wilches

University of Northern Iowa

Recommended Citation
https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1634

This Open Access Graduate Research Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Graduate Research Papers by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@uni.edu.
Teacher autonomy: a review of the research literature

Abstract
This paper reviews conceptual and empirical research on teacher autonomy in the context of school reform across countries. Research shows that teacher autonomy can be conceptualized as a personal sense of freedom from interference or in terms of teachers' exercise of control in four different school domains: Teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, and professional development. Research also confirms that teachers' autonomy for decision making is shaped by a number of personal and contextual factors, and that teachers' directed professional development experiences may enhance their autonomy. This review clarifies the meaning of teacher autonomy and other related terms, and provides an initial framework for the analysis of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences.

This open access graduate research paper is available at UNI ScholarWorks: https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/1634
An Abstract of a Research Paper
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education: Professional Development for Teachers

Jaime A. Usma-Wilches
University of Northern Iowa
August 2006
ABSTRACT

This paper reviews conceptual and empirical research on teacher autonomy in the context of school reform across countries. Research shows that teacher autonomy can be conceptualized as a personal sense of freedom from interference or in terms of teachers' exercise of control in four different school domains: Teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, and professional development. Research also confirms that teachers' autonomy for decision making is shaped by a number of personal and contextual factors, and that teachers' directed professional development experiences may enhance their autonomy. This review clarifies the meaning of teacher autonomy and other related terms, and provides an initial framework for the analysis of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences.
TEACHER AUTONOMY: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH LITERATURE

A Research Paper
Submitted
in Partial fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education: Professional Development for Teachers

Jaime A. Usma-Wilches
University of Northern Iowa
August 2006
This Study by: Jaime Usma-Wilches

Entitled: Teacher Autonomy: A Review of the Research Literature

Has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the Degree of Master of Arts in Education: Professional Development for Teachers

John E. Henning

Dr. John Henning, Chair, Thesis Committee

Thomas R. Berg

Dr. Thomas Berg, Thesis Committee Member

Radhi H. Al-Mabuk

Dr. Radhi Al-Mabuk, Thesis Committee Member

Michael D. Waggoner

Dr. Michael D. Waggoner, Department Head

8/25/06
Date Approved
DEDICATION

Para mi mamá, La Vieja, nuestras familias y todos los amigos quienes han estado siempre apoyándonos y pendientes de nosotros.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to thank Dr John Henning, my advisor, for all his support, patience and useful comments.

I also want to thank Cristina Frodden for her support and insights since I started to work with this idea.

I will never forget my “compañeras” in the research group at Universidad de Antioquia in Colombia, especially those who worked with me in the last project: Luz Mery Orrego, Clara Inés Arias, Maria McNulty, Tifanny Carvajal, and Claudia Patricia Mesa. They have provided me the input for this research.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF TABLES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIST OF FIGURES</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION**  
A Short Account about the Concept .................................................. 2
So, What is Teacher Autonomy? ............................................................. 4
Purpose and Scope of this Study ......................................................... 6
Research Questions .............................................................................. 7
Methodological Considerations about this Review ................................. 7

**CHAPTER 2. EMPIRICAL AND CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE ON TEACHER AUTONOMY**  
Attempts at Developing a Scale for the Measurement of Teacher Autonomy  
Charters (1976) and the Sense of Autonomy Scale (SAS) ........................ 12
Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985) and the Attitudes of Professional Autonomy (APA) Tool ................................................................. 14
Chauvin and Ellet (1993) on the validity of the APA instrument .......... 16
Short and Rinehart (1992) on the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) ................................................................. 18
Wilson (1993) on the Self-Empowerment Index (SEI) ............................ 19
Summary of the Studies Focused on the Creation of a Research Scale .... 22
Teacher Autonomy in the Context of School Reform:
An Initial Approximation to the Factors that Constrain Educators ............ 23

Reyes (1989) on Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Autonomy .......... 24

on Autonomy and Work Environment .................................................. 26

Archbald and Porter (1994)
on Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, and Decentralization ...................... 28

Crawford (2001) on Autonomy and Charter Schools ....................... 29

Summary of Studies on Teacher Autonomy and School Reform ............ 31

Teachers' Exercise of Curricular Autonomy:
Exploring the Construct from Inside ............................................... 31

Newell and Holt (1997)
on Autonomy and Curriculum Implementation ............................. 32

Fleming (1998) on Curriculum Autonomy ........................................ 36

Bjork (2004) on Curriculum Autonomy in Indonesia ....................... 38

Summary of Studies on Curricular Autonomy ................................. 41

The Enhancement and Exercise of Teacher Autonomy in Professional Development Experiences .................................................. 42

Daoud (1999, 2002)
on Autonomy and Teacher-Initiated Action Research .................. 45

Usma and Frodden (2003)
on Autonomy, Action Research, and Innovation ............................ 47

Frodden and Picón (2005)
on Autonomy and Collaborative Action Research ......................... 49

on Autonomy and Teacher Development ........................................ 51

on Autonomy and Reasons to Engage in Professional Development .... 55
Webb (2002) on Autonomy and Sources of Power for Curricular Decision Making … 56

Lamb and Simpson (2003) on Autonomy and Self-Directed Professional Development ………. 57

Summary of Studies on Autonomy and Professional Development ……… 58

Summary of Findings on Teacher Autonomy in This Review …………… 59

CHAPTER 3. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ………………………………………………….. 63

The Subjective Level of Analysis: Teacher Sense of Autonomy
as a Personal Belief and Internal Constraints ……………………………… 63

Findings of Research on Teacher Autonomy as a Personal Belief … 64

Implications from Research on Teacher Autonomy as a Personal Belief ………. 64

The Objective Level of Analysis: Teachers’ Exercise of Autonomy
and External Constraints …………………………………………………… 67

Findings of Research on Teachers’ Exercise of Autonomy ………. 67

Implications from Research on Teachers’ Exercise of Autonomy ………. 68

Domains of Teacher Autonomy ………. 70

Teaching and Assessment ………. 71

Curriculum Development ………. 72

School Functioning ………. 73

Professional Development ………. 73

Implications of Research on the Four School Domains ………. 74

On Professional Development as a Means for Teacher Autonomy ………. 75

Findings on Professional Development for Teacher Autonomy ………. 76
APPENDIX E: SELF-EMPOWERMENT INDEX (SEI) ........................................ 117
APPENDIX F: TEACHER WORK AUTONOMY-AUTONOMY SCALE (TWA) ... 118
APPENDIX G: TEACHING AUTONOMY SCALE (TAS) ................................. 119
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Classification of Emerging Categories According to the Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Comparison among Empirical Studies on Teacher Autonomy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>A Systemic View of Professional Development for Teachers’ Autonomy</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Excerpts from Data and their Emergent Categories</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Teacher autonomy represents one of those concepts gaining increasing interest among educational researchers, policy makers, administrators, and practitioners across content areas in the last two decades. During this time, different research conferences (AILA 1999, 2002, 2005), a listserv on autonomy in language learning (Auto-L), and a number of conceptual and empirical individual papers and edited books have devoted quite a lot of attention to this topic. Scholars and practitioners have connected teacher autonomy to student learning (Palfreyman & Smith, 2003; Sinclair, McGrath, & Lamb, 2000), teacher education (Little, 1995; Reeve, 1998; Smith, 2003; Tort-Moloney, 1997), professional development (Fleming, 1998; Smyth, 1995), teacher empowerment (Short & Rinehart, 1992) and broader issues such as privatization and school reform (Contreras, 1997; Levin, 2001). Teacher autonomy has surfaced as one of those captivating contemporary terms associated with educational innovation and decentralization of schools across countries.

Yet, for a variety of reasons and despite its widespread use, the meaning of teacher autonomy and what it implies for schooling and school stakeholders still remains opaque. First of all, the little correlation among theorists within and across areas has ended up in a notable inconsistency in the use of the concept, how it is researched, and what it implies for theory and practice (Santos, 2002; Smith, 2003). Second, although teacher autonomy has been connected to a number of theories including professional development, teacher decision making, teacher efficacy, and empowerment, this relationship still remains
unclear (Short, 1994; Short and Rinehart, 1992). Additionally, articles about teacher autonomy seem to be more connected to theoretical analyses than to empirical studies that may test and enrich previous ideas (e.g., Benson, 2001; Huang, 2005), while the absence of literature reviews in the area does not allow for initial generalizations across studies and theories (Vieira, 2003). Indeed, despite a vast set of strategies to promote teacher autonomy described in the literature (e.g., Daoud, 1999) or discussions about teacher autonomy for student autonomy (e.g., Smith, 2000; Thavenius, 1999), very few studies permit a rigorous assessment of the effects those strategies may have on educators (e.g., Daoud, 1999; Lamb & Simpom, 2003; Usma & Frodden, 2003), how being a more autonomous teacher contributes to students learning (Reeve, 1998), and how teacher autonomy in its different dimensions can be evaluated (Friedman, 1999). Teachers and researchers interested in the analysis and promotion of teacher autonomy find the concept opaque and hard to examine from an empirical perspective.

**A Short Account about the Concept**

The concept of teacher autonomy has entered the field of education and other content areas such as language teaching and learning for different reasons, which, to a large extent, has determined the way the concept has been discussed in the conceptual literature, or investigated in empirical research. In specific areas such as applied linguistics, the area of major interest to the reviewer, teacher autonomy has been more related, and a number of times limited, to the investigation and promotion of student autonomy. Different authors agree with Little (1995) on the interdependence between student and teacher autonomy and the necessity to provide teachers with opportunities to
exercise their autonomy if they are expected to do the same with their pupils. Thavenius (1999) for example, remarks on the new teacher’s role for the promotion of student autonomy, and how the promotion of teacher autonomy is essential for helping learners to be autonomous, whereas Benson (2000) insists on this relationship and states that “in order to allow learners the opportunity to develop autonomy, teachers must themselves exercise autonomy in relation to their own practice” (p. 117). Furthermore, Santos (2002) summarizes her concerns about this issue by asking: “if the teachers are not autonomous themselves how can they develop their students’ autonomy?” (p. 1). Finally, Smith (2003) insists on the importance of pedagogy for autonomy, the promotion of teacher autonomy in its different dimensions, and the importance of convincing teachers of the value of student autonomy.

In general education scholarship, the term has been analyzed from a broader and political perspective, however. Forsyth & Danisiewicz (1985) have connected teacher autonomy to the professionalization of teachers, while Smyth (1995) and Contreras (1997) have related the concept to educational reform. According to Contreras (1997), new trends in educational policies that apparently promote teachers’ professional autonomy actually entail teachers’ intensification of work, reduction of time for collaboration and discussion of educational goals, and external control and accountability procedures that constraint teachers’ freedom and creativity. This proletarianization of teaching and imposition of practices have reduced teaching to a daily survival enterprise in which the professional work of teachers is limited to the simple provision of a service
with a little exercise of original action. In this context, teachers' professional autonomy has ended up in teachers' isolation and their dependence on externally imposed agendas.

So, what is Teacher Autonomy?

The conceptual literature on teacher autonomy shows a variety of definitions for this concept. According to Smith (2003) in the case of language teaching and learning "definitions have tended to advocate one aspect to the exclusion of others, from teacher autonomy as a generalized 'right to freedom from control' (Benson 2000), to teachers' capacity to engage in self-directed teaching (Little 1995, Tort-Moloney 1997), to teacher's autonomy as learners (Smith 2000, Savage 2000)" (p. 1). A similar phenomenon occurs in general education. Definitions of the concept vary from those that define it as the process of building a personal identity as professionals in conjunction with the interests of the educational community (Contreras, 1997), or those that associate it with teachers' isolation as a resulting effect of how schools have been traditionally organized (Anderson, 1987).

A compendium of definitions of teacher autonomy presented in the literature shows a wide variety of perceptions in teachers and researchers. Some authors have provided straightforward definitions taken from the existent literature on student autonomy and define it as freedom for control over teaching (Shaw, 2002). Others have kept narrowly focused on their specific classrooms and defined it as the promotion of student autonomy (Barfield et al., 2002; Thavenius, 1999); whereas, a number of scholars have elaborated on the concept and described it as a multidimensional capacity associated with shared decision making based on students' needs and interests, teachers' self
regulation, professional competence, and freedom from externally imposed agendas (Castle & Aichele, 1994).

Five different scholars have provided the bases for a definition of teacher autonomy in applied linguistics. In 1995, David Little called the attention about the importance of having autonomous teachers in order to promote student autonomy, alerting for the necessity to analyze this concept in a field such as applied linguistics where learner autonomy was getting much attention and was being discussed and researched. In 1996, William Littlewood described autonomy from two different perspectives, the capacity for independent decision making, which includes having abilities and skills for action; and willingness, which evolves motivation and confidence to carry out choices. In 2000, Ian McGrath suggested that teacher autonomy could be perceived as both self directed professional development and freedom from control by others. In 2003, Richard Smith summarized some of the previous discussions and highlighted the multidimensionality of teacher autonomy as well as the importance of teacher-learner autonomy associated with professional development. Finally, in 2005 Jing Huang integrated these conceptual discussions and presented one of the most recent and comprehensive definitions in the field. He defined teacher autonomy as “teachers’ willingness, capacity and freedom to take control of their own teaching and learning” (p. 4). This definition will be provided as an initial starting point for this review, but will be revised after the examination of the empirical and conceptual research in this paper.
Purpose and Scope of this Study

All this variety of definitions, purposes, and emphases has resulted in methodological problems for educational researchers. In Colombia, for example, although a group of teachers and students, the author included, have been researching the promotion of teacher autonomy in action research projects, they continue to struggle when connecting the theory to the observed reality. On the one hand, the lack of conceptual clarity in the literature about what teacher autonomy implies, how it manifests, and how it can be assessed has derived into theoretical misunderstanding in the researchers. Additionally, the fuzzy theoretical connection between teacher autonomy and concepts such as empowerment, decision making, self-directed learning, independence, and teacher efficacy, among other issues, has contributed to make slower and quite challenging analyses (Usma, 2005). Finally, the notable absence of empirical studies on this topic has deprived these practitioners from previous models that might have oriented and qualified their research. Attempts to make teacher autonomy more researchable by defining the term and exploring its construct seem to be desirable and essential for teachers and researchers (Benson, 2001; Santos, 2002).

Thus, this paper will attempt to clarify and expand the concept of teacher autonomy, describe its relationship with other related terms, and provide an initial comprehensive framework for its enhancement and analysis in professional development experiences. For this purpose, empirical and conceptual pieces of research reported by educational researchers and theorists beyond and within applied linguistics, across different countries, and by using different methods will be presented and integrated. This
will allow the reviewer to describe the complexity of the concept, how it has been investigated, the different internal and external constraints that have been presented by educational researchers and practitioners across countries, and the main limitations of research in this area. Finally, this review will permit a revision of some of the current definitions of teacher autonomy, and, as a practical product, display an initial framework for the enhancement and evaluation of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences.

**Research Questions**

Several research questions will be addressed in this review:

1. What is it meant by teacher autonomy in the field of language teaching and general educational research?

2. How does teacher autonomy relate to other concepts such as professional development, teacher empowerment, and independence?

3. How can teacher autonomy be enhanced and evaluated in professional development experiences?

**Methodological Considerations about this Review**

After having identified the focus of this review, the following step was defining an appropriate procedure to carry out the task. To begin with, texts that had been used by the reviewer and his colleagues in previous research projects were revisited paying special attention to how the concept of teacher autonomy had been examined in conceptual papers, and how it had been researched and discussed based on empirical evidence. Unfortunately, only a few empirical studies were found in this initial stage.
(Daoud, 1999; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Usma & Frodden, 2003), as most of the authors and edited books revised described teacher autonomy from a theoretical perspective. (Contreras, 1997; Gimeno-Sacristán, 2000; Sinclair, McGrath, & Lamb, 2000; Smith, 2003). The next step consisted on browsing research reports in books, journals, research reports discussed in a listserv on autonomy, conference papers, different databases, including ERIC and Education Full Text, and other materials mentioned in different articles and procured by using interlibrary loan across the United States, and in some cases downloaded from the internet or recommended and provided by other practitioners.

Some of the articles found in the literature, and some of those mentioned in a previous review on teacher autonomy described by Huang (2005) were removed from the list of empirical studies in this paper as they referred more directly to reflective practice, or pedagogy for autonomy, without directly addressing the concept of teacher autonomy (e.g., Reeve, 1998; Serrano-Sampedro, 1997; Stanley, 1999; Thavenius, 1999; Vieira, 1999, 2003). In other cases, reports about teacher autonomy were eliminated when they did not provide enough information about the research question, purpose, method, theoretical framework that guided the study, or a discussion of the findings connected to the concept of teacher autonomy (e.g., McGrath, 2000; Santos, 2002; Smith, 2000). Anyhow, studies excluded from the empirical research review were later integrated whenever they contributed to clarify the topic under discussion.

Another important caveat is worth mentioning before proceeding to the next section: Although the starting point for this review has been the literature produced in applied linguistics, the concept of teacher autonomy has been examined beyond these
limited domains. The reviewer considers that teacher professional autonomy transcends any particular discipline and needs to be considered from a multidisciplinary perspective in order to account for its complexity. This examination requires a thoughtful integration of theories discussed in general education, educational psychology, social sciences, and specific content areas or fields such as language teaching and learning. According to the reviewer, only by integrating theories and research findings from different areas, educational researchers will be provided with a more comprehensive definition and description of this fascinating matter.

Finally, acknowledging the impossibility for most educational practitioners to access many of the reported studies in this review, and in order to promote further research in this area, some features have been included in this review. Each study will include a succinct presentation of its focus and context, a definition of the concept of teacher autonomy that guided the study, the method used, and the main findings that contributed to enrich the current understanding of this phenomenon. Additionally, research instruments such as quantitative scales used for the measurement of teacher autonomy will be annexed when they were available in the original report. All these features will hopefully ease the application of this work in other educational contexts where bibliographic resources scant or other barriers deprive researchers to access the original cited articles.

The rest of this paper will be divided into four more chapters. In chapter II a revision of 21 empirical reports and conceptual papers on teacher autonomy will be presented. In Chapter III the most salient patterns emerged from the review will be
discussed including a revised definition of the concept. Finally, in Chapter IV some practical applications of this endeavor will be presented.
CHAPTER 2

EMPIRICAL AND CONCEPTUAL LITERATURE ON TEACHER AUTONOMY

This section will present 21 empirical reports on teacher autonomy reported by educational researchers during the last three decades (see Table A1 in Appendix A). These pieces of research will be organized into four main sections: reports that focus on the development of a scale to operationalize and measure the construct; papers that have examined teacher autonomy in the context of school reform; articles that have described the exercise of curricular autonomy; and studies that have examined teacher autonomy in professional development experiences. When necessary, empirical studies will be complemented with theoretical and additional related research from different areas in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of this issue. This empirical and conceptual review will be followed by a discussion of some emergent patterns in Chapter III, and a research proposal in Chapter IV.

Attempts at Developing a Scale for the Measurement of Teacher Autonomy

Within the empirical studies that have attempted to operationalize the concept of teacher autonomy, six of them have been almost exclusively devoted to the construction and validation of a research tool for its measurement. Each of these studies provides, besides the instrument itself, quite insightful thoughts about what teachers autonomy means, what it implies, how it may be researched, and how it is connected to other constructs such as teachers' empowerment and decision making. They will represent the first set of reports to be reviewed in this paper.
Charters (1976) and the Sense of Autonomy Scale (SAS)

The first of these pieces of research is a well known classic reported by Charters in 1976 to present the construction of the Sense of Autonomy Scale (SAS). In this research, teacher sense of autonomy was conceptualized as "a psychological construct representing a teacher's beliefs about his or her freedom from external interference, pressure, or control in performing the work of classroom instruction" (p. 217). The concept was subdivided in five different domains: 1) Control over the pace of work; 2) Freedom from the pressure of work; 3) Freedom to choose the techniques of work; 4) Freedom to determine the criteria and techniques for assessing student performance; and 5) Freedom from surveillance by parents, supervisors, or other teachers.

As implied from above, teacher's sense of autonomy is operationalized in this study as a subjective feeling towards freedom for decision making. According to the author, this implies a separation between objective and subjective variables that may affect teachers' evaluation of their sense of autonomy. For instance, those problems that teachers experience in their interaction with learners should not be analyzed as constraints for teacher autonomy unless they cannot be resolved by the teacher due to external forces that go beyond the classroom walls, making teachers feel that their autonomy is being violated. Furthermore, teachers' beliefs about their own competence should not be part of teachers' sense of autonomy as they can be differently experienced independently of the external forces that may constraint their work. The same applies to other constructs such as personal efficacy, confidence, and competence, which, according to the author, do not necessarily refer to external pressures that affect teachers' freedom,
but to mediators between objective facts and teachers’ sense of autonomy and final decision making. As the author stands, a high sense of autonomy is a necessary, yet not sufficient condition for effective teaching and “[t]he absence of outside interference, regulation, or pressure does not certify ipso facto that he or she will feel in full command of the instructional task” (p. 219).

For the development of the instrument, Charters and colleagues drew on ideas by Lortie (1969, 1973) and Blaumer (1964) on the domains of teacher sense of autonomy. A 24 item questionnaire in a six point Likert scale format (see Appendix B) was designed and tested with 619 teachers in nine different public schools in Oregon and California. Analyses of data allowed the researchers to suggest some provocative findings. A slightly higher sense of autonomy was found for females as compared to males, a much higher sense of autonomy for kindergarten teachers as compared to elementary teachers, which also increased with age, teaching experience, and time being tenure at the school. Although the study did not provide conclusive findings about teachers’ sense of autonomy, its importance lies on its initial examination of some domains where teachers exercise their freedom, the description of the whole process of applying theoretical ideas for the design of a research tool, and the enlightening discussion about the subjective versus objective condition of teacher autonomy. This study represents an initial approximation to the empirical investigation of teacher sense of autonomy and different researchers refer to it as a valuable reference in the field.
Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985) and the Attitudes of Professional Autonomy (APA) Tool

In a second report on the design of an instrument reported ten years later, Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985) examined a sample of 1,000 university students from eight different programs: medicine, law, education, nursing, social work, librarianship, engineering, and business administration. They scrutinized their perceptions of autonomy in order to provide a theoretical model for the investigation of professionalization and its connection with teacher autonomy. In this study, the authors drew on Hall’s definition of autonomy understood as “the feeling that the practitioner ought to be allowed to make decisions without external pressures from clients, from others who are not members of his profession, or from his employing organization” (Hall, 1969 as cited in Forsyth & Danisiewicz, 1985, p. 60). Autonomy and professionalism were interconnected by arguing that the more freedom a person exercises in her/his occupation, the more professional that person could be considered. The authors distinguished between autonomy from clients (e.g., students and parents in the case of education), and autonomy from employing organization (e.g., the school administration or district) and distinguished between true- and semi-proessions by describing the former as those occupations in which members exhibit client- and employing organization-autonomy, and the latter as those that limited their autonomy to only one power dimension.

In order to test this theory, the authors designed and distributed a 22 Likert-type items instrument, the Attitudes of Professional Autonomy (APA), equally subdivided into autonomy from client and autonomy from organization items (see Appendix C). The data showed high levels of attitudinal autonomy on both dimensions in medicine and law,
which allowed the authors to classify these occupations as true professions. Education, engineering, and business were found to be client-autonomous semi-professions, while nursing and social work were characterized as autonomous from the organization.

Librarianship did not show attitudinal autonomy in either dimension and was characterized as a mimic profession. In the case of education the study showed that while future teachers considered their future colleagues as independent from their students, they did not perceive the same freedom from the administration, which, as will be discussed later, has been considered as an inappropriate perception of the concept of teacher autonomy in which students' and parents' right to participate in the decisions of their own education is left aside.

The value of this study for this review is twofold. First of all, it describes different agents that may constrain teacher autonomy by classifying them as clients and organization, thus aligning with Charters' fifth domain. Second, this study evidences the trend to define teachers' professionalism in terms of autonomy from students and schools, which, as discussed by a number of scholars later on in this paper, is less than an convenient approach towards the educational labor. By combining the previous two reports, it is also possible to purport that teacher autonomy may be examined from two different perspectives: as sense of freedom to execute a number of tasks associated with curriculum matters (Charters, 1976), as well as freedom from external agents that may constrain teachers possibility to act (Forsyth & Danisiewicz, 1985). These two initial conclusions require further examination, however.
Chauvin and Ellet (1993) on the validity of the APA instrument

In another study, Chauvin and Ellet (1993) explored the construct validity of the previously mentioned APA instrument as a measure of professional orientation by studying a sample of all teachers in 94 schools in 6 districts in Louisiana. The analysis of a total of 1921 teachers’ responses suggested some remarkable findings. On the one hand, it proved APA as a valid and reliable instrument to measure professional attitudinal autonomy. Additionally, the study showed that professional attitudinal autonomy, as measured by the APA, could be described as a two-dimensional construct: Interpersonal Autonomy, instead of just client autonomy as suggested by Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985), and Organizational Autonomy. Interpersonal autonomy was described as “individuals’ preferences to: 1) act independently of human influence that might emanate from co-workers (e.g., teachers), other professionals or adults (e.g., other education professionals), or clients (e.g., students); and 2) maintain higher levels of allegiance to professional convictions regarding their roles and decision-making” (p. 18). Organizational autonomy was defined as “individuals’ preference to act independently of organizational influence and rules” (p. 18).

Further analysis of the data provided important insights about the way teacher autonomy could be investigated. They showed that, although the APA had been found to be a reliable instrument, items in the instrument should be re-aligned in order to increase its validity and reliability. More importantly, the authors sustained that conceptions of professional orientation limited to autonomy and power for decision making were not sufficient constructs and methods to assess the broader idea of professional orientation, or
what comprises a professional. These restricted ideas do not acknowledge current educational trends that include school restructuring, teacher empowerment, collegial work and collaboration, group consensus, and reflective practice, among others. In other words, analyzing the idea of professional orientation just in terms of autonomy as freedom from external pressures would not allow researchers to perceive the complexity of contemporary teaching and decision making. As the authors emphasized “autonomy may be a part of professional orientation, but issues related to professional practice and ethics may also be important aspects of this construct” (p. 22). To conclude, the authors called the attention about using alternative methods for the investigation of teacher autonomy and professional orientation, as the quantitative methods reported in the literature did not adequately acknowledge the complexity of teaching and the number of contextual variables that affect the educational environment.

In this manner, Chauvin and Ellet clarify some of the previous questions emerged from Forsyth and Danisiewicz (1985) and provide further insights about issues discussed above. They depict the limitations of a theory of professionalism that is solely based on autonomy and calls for a more comprehensive view of what is meant by “professional.” They also expand client-autonomy to autonomy as an interpersonal dimension, which allows for a more integral view of teachers’ interaction with school stakeholders. Finally, the authors call the attention about alternative methods to investigate teacher autonomy by showing a number of issues that relate to this complex construct. Future studies will present further insights on these concerns and will permit additional discussion about the concept.
Short and Rinehart (1992) on the School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES)

The fourth study that described the construction and validation of a quantitative tool is presented by Short and Rinehart (1992) and complemented by Short in 1994. They related teacher autonomy with the concept of empowerment and defined it in terms of control over work and freedom for decision making. In order to create and validate the 38-item School Participant Empowerment Scale (SPES) (see Appendix D) a total of 211 teachers in public schools participated by responding to a series of items about what made them feel empowered in schools. Analyses of data allowed the researchers to provide a number of constructs related to teacher autonomy and empowerment.

Empowerment was described as the “process whereby school participants develop the competence to take charge of their own growth and resolve their own problems” (Short, 1994, p. 488) and subdivided into six different dimensions, one of which is teacher autonomy.

1. Autonomy: Teachers' beliefs about their freedom to control certain aspects of their work life. This may be control over scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning.
2. Decision Making: The participation of teachers in critical decisions that directly affect their work. In many cases, this means participation in and responsibility for decisions involving budgets, teacher selection, scheduling, curriculum, and other programmatic areas.
3. Professional Growth: Teachers' perceptions that the school in which they work provides them with opportunities to grow and develop professionally, to learn continuously, and to expand one's own skills through the work life of the school.
4. Status: Teacher perceptions that they have professional respect and admiration from colleagues. In addition, teachers believe that they have colleague support. Teachers also feel that others respect their knowledge and expertise.
5. Self-Efficacy: Teachers' perceptions that they have the skills and ability to help students learn, are competent in building effective programs for students, and can effect changes in student learning.
6. Impact: Teachers' perceptions that they have an effect and influence on school life. (Adapted from Short, 1994, pp.490-491)
Although this specific report did not provide additional results in terms of teachers’ perceptions of their own autonomy, it planted the seeds for its analysis within the context of teacher empowerment. In a provocative manner, teacher autonomy is perceived as teachers’ subjective feeling to control teaching matters in its interplay with other concepts such as empowerment, decision making, professional growth, and teachers’ efficacy. Additionally, the study presents the SPES instrument as a reliable measurement scale that will be actually used in other studies included in this review. The next study present some additional dimensions that relate to teacher autonomy and empowerment.

Wilson (1993) on the Self-Empowerment Index (SEI)

Wilson (1993) described validity and reliability qualities of an instrument designed to measure “teacher self-empowerment, or teachers’ internal sense of autonomy and their ability to express their autonomy to others” (p. 728). In this study, teacher autonomy represents one on the dimensions of self-empowerment as, according to the author:

Self empowered individuals are autonomous in that they believe the best source of authority comes from within themselves as they accept their thoughts and feelings as being worthy. They are willing to express thoughts and feelings to others, are willing to take risks, are concerned with providing service to others, are open to learning from others, and participate in open, nonmanipulative relationships with others. (p. 729)

As presented in the article, the study of teacher autonomy and self-empowerment is important as educational institutions are being encouraged to empower their educators by providing more opportunities for them to collaborate and work together, while teachers
are expected to have an internal sense of power, and researchers need to develop new instruments and techniques to be able to measure this construct.

Wilson and her colleagues designed the Self-Empowerment Index (SEI) (see Appendix E), pre-tested it with 115 teachers, pilot tested it with 258 educators, and field tested it with 254 teachers. Analyses of data showed that items in the SEI could be subdivided into three factors:

- Autonomy: Teachers having internal strength or internal sense of power for decision making.
- Courage to Take Risks: Teachers having the courage to take risks by saying and doing what they think and feel is right or important.
- Self-reflection: Teachers admitting their mistakes to others and being open to learning from criticism and from listening to others who have thoughts different from their own (Adapted from Wilson, 1993, p. 735).

The study did not offer an extensive discussion on the concept of teacher autonomy; yet, its value is purported in that it provides a reliable, useful and practical instrument for teachers’ self-assessment of sense of autonomy within the context of teacher empowerment. The study also ratified previous conceptualizations of the construct as a subjective feeling for decision making, continued to connect it to empowerment, and included two additional related dimensions: risk taking, and self-reflection. The authors modestly acknowledged the initial stage of this scale, and declared its potential application by other researchers.

Friedman (1999) on the Teacher Work-Autonomy (TWA) Scale

In the last of this series of studies that have been focused on the design of an instrument, Friedman (1999) discusses the limitations of previous scales such as Charters’ SAS and Chauvin and Ellett’s APA for the assessment of teacher autonomy.
According to the scholar, previous analyses have neglected to include the capacity to initiate ideas and activities and get involved in major school policies and practices as part of teacher autonomy. Instead, these studies have placed too much attention on external pressures, and perceive autonomy as a barrier between the teacher and the school administration, not as a process of teacher empowerment. For these reasons, the author argues for the design of an instrument that may acknowledge these new practices and presents the process of designing and validating a new scale. Teacher professional autonomy is conceptualized as teachers having the power to make decisions in the pedagogical matters related to the curriculum, as well as the organizational issues under which the school functions.

The 32-item scale instrument designed and reported in this article was called Teacher Work-Autonomy (TWA) (See Appendix F) and was designed with the participation of a total of 806 Israeli elementary and secondary school teachers. Further analysis of the instrument allowed the researchers to group items that may describe teacher professional autonomy in four different factors:

- Pedagogical issues:
  1. Curriculum Development: Introducing new "homemade" or "imported" curricula and introducing major changes in existing formal and informal curricula.
  2. Student teaching and assessment: Making decisions related to teaching and assessing students’ attainment, norms of student behavior, physical environment, and different teaching emphases on components of mandatory curriculum.

- Organizational issues:
  3. School Mode of Operating: Participating in the establishment of school goals and vision, budget allocation, school pedagogic idiosyncrasy, and school policy regarding class composition and student admission.
  4. Staff Development: Determining the subjects, time schedule, and procedures of in-service training of teachers as part of the general school practice. (Adapted from Friedman, 1999, p. 70)
Friedman's study, considered by the reviewer as one of the biggest contributions to the field, provides a comprehensive view of teacher professional autonomy and a reliable instrument for its measurement. In agreement with previously presented studies and progressive definitions of the concept, this construct of teacher autonomy does not only include decisions at the pedagogical level, which seems to be the general trend in the previously reviewed studies, but it also describes teacher autonomy at the institutional level. This level includes staff professional development, discussed theoretically by diverse authors (McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2003) and decision making in terms of school vision and goals (Contreras, 1997; Gimeno-Sacristán, 2000). Coincidentally, this is the last instrument found in the literature that has been designed for the investigation of this concept from a quantitative perspective, which evidences the progressive evolution of the concept in this type of studies. Further investigation on the use of this measure is expected as well as future developments and improvements.

Summary of the Studies Focused on the Creation of a Research Scale

The previously reviewed six studies indicate some initial conditions of teacher autonomy as a research construct. First, the previous studies have presented teacher autonomy as a subjective sense of freedom. This freedom can be shaped by personal, interpersonal and organizational factors such as teacher competence and self-efficacy, external regulations, or the interests and needs of other school stakeholders that inevitably limit teacher decision making. Second, besides studying those factors that regulate teacher autonomy, the concept can be examined in terms of different domains in which teachers may exercise control, which not only include matters such as curriculum
development, teaching, and assessment, but also organizational endeavors such as school functioning and staff development. Finally, it seems to be clear that, because of the complex and subjective condition of teachers’ sense of autonomy, educational researchers require the use of alternative methods to go beyond what teachers may report in a survey, and may not necessarily reflect all their concerns about this issue. This calls for interpretive research methodologies that may investigate the construct more in depth and may examine different factors that interplay in educational contexts. The next section will elaborate a bit more on these and other points of contention.

**Teacher Autonomy in the Context of School Reform: An Initial Approximation to the Factors that Constrain Educators**

Different reports and conceptual articles have devoted a special attention to analyze how latest reforms in the educational system are actually affecting teachers’ development and exercise of their power, when school stakeholders are required to take control of their own schools at the organizational and academic level (e.g., Levin, 2001). The role of the central government has been devoted to applying accountability processes to have power over what teachers and administrators are doing and what students learn in each school (e.g. Mullen, Stover, & Corley, 2001), while educational researchers deplore that more money is being spent in controlling the schools and the teachers than in providing them with necessary professional development to be autonomous (Webb, 2002). Accountability processes such as teacher, program, and school accreditation; standardized testing applied to teachers and students at all levels; and national systems that assign resources based on imposed criteria seem to be increasingly applied across countries. Teachers find a new system replete of new responsibilities (Kohonen, 2001)
that commonly go beyond their traditional teaching role in the classroom, generating an array of contradictory feelings and reactions that end up affecting their confidence, energy and motivation (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). Unfortunately, educators are not provided with the conditions to exercise their power, and the promise of having more autonomy is being translated into more control from external agencies, which seems to be the case of the so called “charter schools” in the United States (e.g., Crawford, 2001; Kane & Lauricella, 2001; Wells & Scott, 2001).

The focus of attention in this section will be placed on five different studies that examine teachers’ perceptions of their own autonomy in the context of contemporary educational policies that promote central curriculum control through high-stakes testing, higher graduation requirements, prescriptive curriculum policy, textbook control, accountability, and school accreditation, among other procedures. These events and their effects on teachers’ sense of autonomy, job satisfaction, and commitment have been examined by different researchers, and will be summarized in this segment.

Reyes (1989) on Commitment, Job Satisfaction and Autonomy

The first of these studies on autonomy and school reform is reported by Reyes (1989). He analyzed the relationship among teacher autonomy, job satisfaction, and commitment with the organization in public school teachers and mid-level school administrators. Teacher organizational autonomy was defined and measured as the “amount of authority an individual has to make decisions concerning his/her immediate surroundings” (p. 64). It was sub-divided into internal and external degree of decision making according to the domain in which decisions are taken, being in-home curricular
matters, for example, or the process of affecting the broader educational policies that influence schooling. Job satisfaction was described as the emotional state that shows the "degree to which employees have a positive affective orientation toward employment by the organization" (p. 64).

Attitudinal commitment was conceptualized as the individual’s acceptance of the values shared in the organization, the desire to exert effort on its behalf and the willingness to remain being its employee. The review of the literature in this study showed how attitudinal commitment was related to issues such as employees’ desires and intent to remain in the organization, absenteeism and tardiness, age, opportunities for advancement, education, sense of competence, job challenge, amount of feedback provided in the job, opportunities for social interaction, organizational dependability and trust, perceptions of personal investment, rewards, realization of expectations, motivation, and performance.

In order to assess the relationship among the three variables, autonomy in decision making, job satisfaction, and commitment with the organization, 72 teachers and 72 administrators in a Midwestern state in the United States were interviewed and administered standardized questionnaires designed for this particular study. Although there was no statistical difference in this matter, administrators reported higher levels of autonomy, job satisfaction and commitment than teachers. Additionally, administrators from smaller districts reported higher levels of autonomy and commitment than those in large school districts, while teachers from small school districts showed higher levels of commitment than their colleagues in the large ones. The author concurred with some of
the previous scholars in suggesting the initial condition of this research and the need for additional studies that examine these issues.

Differences between teachers and administrators indicate a tentative relationship among autonomy and job position. Furthermore, comparison among school districts suggests that size of the organization may affect school administrators' sense of autonomy. The study also confirms previous operationalizations of the concept of autonomy as decision making, and is found to be another valid attempt to understand the complexity of this phenomena and how it may relate to other constructs such as job satisfaction and commitment.


The second and third studies correspond to Carolyn Pearson and colleagues' analyses of teacher perception of autonomy and its relationship with external environmental school factors. In the first piece, Pearson and Hall (1993) define teacher autonomy as "those perceptions that teachers have regarding whether they can control their work environment" (p. 173), and present the process of developing and validating a 22 Likert-type items instrument, the Teaching Autonomy Scale (TAS) (see Appendix G). According to this study, teaching autonomy can be subdivided into two dimensions: general teaching autonomy or "issues concerning classroom standards of conduct and personal on-the-job discretion" (p. 177) and curricular autonomy referring to "issues concerning selection of activities and materials and instructional planning and sequencing" (p. 177).
The validation of the instrument showed that teachers' perception of autonomy was related to a number of work environmental factors. Middle school teachers expressed significantly higher levels of autonomy than elementary and high school teachers, which envisioned a relationship between sense of autonomy and level taught. Yet, contrary to what could be expected, teachers' perception of autonomy did not differ by age, teaching experience, or previous formation, which encouraged the authors to research more on these issues.

In Pearson (1995) the scholar reports her further analyses of these issues. For this purpose, she complemented the TAS instrument with information related to teachers' age, years of teaching experience, highest academic degree, subject matter emphasis, as well as teachers' work environment such as paperwork and instructional load, levels of stress on the job, satisfaction with the current salary and current employment, and items about teachers' attitudes towards their profession, their students, parents in the school, and administration.

Responses of the 416 teachers surveyed in a large urban school district in Florida, United States, suggested important factors associated with teachers' exercise of their autonomy. They showed that autonomous teachers feel more satisfaction with teaching, are slightly more satisfied with their salary, perceive a lighter instructional and paperwork load, are under less stress, and have a more positive attitude towards their pupils. In connection with the previous study, data showed secondary teachers expressed higher sense of autonomy than elementary teachers. In the same manner, no relationship between autonomy and academic ability, teaching experience, gender, age, and prior
formation was found. Finally, the author emphasized on the young condition of research on autonomy and its relationship with the school reform movement.

These two studies develop some ideas discussed by Reyes (1989) and provide a lot of insight about work-related factors that may or may not affect teachers' perception of autonomy and. Issues such as job satisfaction, low levels of stress, satisfaction with salary, lighter paperwork and teaching load have found to be directly connected to teacher's sense of autonomy, which provides good bases to understand the concept within the context of school reform, and generates further questions about the conditions for the exercise of teacher autonomy. These tentative findings will be complemented by the next two studies in this section.

Archbald and Porter (1994) on Autonomy, Job Satisfaction, and Decentralization

Archbald and Porter (1994) continued to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. According to the authors, concerns about the effects of curriculum control and central regulation procedures on teachers' sense of professional autonomy, job satisfaction, and self-efficacy represent an existing preoccupation of educators, researchers and policy makers. They defined teacher autonomy as teacher and staff control over classroom content, pedagogy, and assessment. For this study, 195 school mathematics and social studies teachers under conditions of high, medium, and low curriculum control were surveyed in order to determine the influence of these policies on their sense of autonomy and job satisfaction. The instrument used contained 24 items organized in four different scales:

1. Influences of external control and teacher discretion in determining the content of the course.
2. Teacher control over classroom content, books, topics, and skills, as well as pedagogical methods, homework, and standards for achievement in their own classroom.

3. Staff involvement in making decisions about content to be taught in their courses.

4. Teacher empowerment as teacher self-efficacy or confidence to succeed in teaching; job satisfaction on the job; and schoolwide expectations for students and staff high performance. (Adapted from Archbald & Porter, 1994, pp. 28-31)

Analyses of data showed that all kinds of teachers reported more control over pedagogy than content in all types of schools, while teachers in low controlled curriculum schools exercised more autonomy and manifested better involvement, satisfaction and expectations than those in high and medium curriculum control schools. Even so, comparisons among the three types of central control schools examined in the study rendered ambiguous findings about teachers’ reduction of autonomy due to central control policies. In several occasions, teachers under medium controlled curriculum policies reported lower levels of autonomy than teachers in the other two types of schools, thus sending confusing messages about the real reason why they might feel less autonomous than the other participants in the study. For these reasons, the authors of this report also emphasized on the need for further investigation that might use alternative research methods to investigate this relationship. Some of these issues have been equally addressed in the next article, with less contradictory findings, and will be addressed and clarified in a set of case studies to be presented in a coming section.

Crawford (2001) on Autonomy and Charter Schools

Crawford (2001) investigated the extent to which charter schools, a model that provides more school autonomy in return for accountability, may affect teacher autonomy. Inspired by Marks and Louis (1997) the author suggested that “[i]nvolve...
in decision making consumes workers’ time, immerses them in responsibility beyond
their own specialized work, necessitates negotiation where interests conflict, and requires
participants to be accountable for their decisions” (p. 192). To study these issues, 202
public charter school teachers and 185 public traditional school teachers from Colorado
and Michigan provided information based on the autonomy and decision making
subscales previously presented in the SPES instrument designed by Short and Rinehart

Analyzes of data showed that traditional public school teachers are provided with
more opportunities for decision making than teachers in charter schools, sharply
contrasting with the original purpose of this new legislation. In other words, what these
data suggested was that the original idea of providing schools with more autonomy in
return for accountability seems to be problematic, especially, when teacher autonomy is
associated with additional responsibilities and stringent accountability procedures that
constrain teacher freedom for decision making. Crawford reports on previous studies that
had found a negative correlation between accountability and autonomy and aligned with
Smylie et al. (1996) makes clear that “[w]hen teachers perceive an increase in
accountability, they perceive a decrease in autonomy. In other words, as teachers become
more professional and they are given more decision-making power, the results of their
decisions come under closer scrutiny” (p. 197). The author concludes by asserting:

Charter school legislation was intended to create a model of public schooling that
would be free from the constraints of the bureaucratic educational system currently in place in the United States. Charter schools are supposed to free
teachers from all of the rules and regulations that inhibit good teaching and
innovative practices in the classroom. Teachers in charter schools and charter
school themselves are to be held accountable for results in return for higher levels
of autonomy. The results of this study and others (Bomotti et al., 1999; Crawford & Forsyth, 2000; Wholstetter & Griffin, 1997) suggest that teachers in charter schools may not be realizing the promise of autonomy granted in the charter school bargain. (p.198)

Summary of Studies on Teacher Autonomy and School Reform

Some initial conclusions can be drawn from these five studies on teacher autonomy and school reform. On the one hand, teacher autonomy seems to be closely connected to teachers’ satisfaction and commitment with their job. In this relationship, factors such as teachers’ salary, job position, teaching and paperwork load, levels of stress, as well as educational policies that increase teachers’ responsibilities and accountability procedures impinge on teachers’ sense of autonomy and satisfaction with their profession. Additionally, as this body of research initially indicates, the connection among teacher autonomy, school reform and accountability is more complex than it could be perceived by policy makers. Educational legislations that increase teachers’ responsibilities do not necessarily promote teacher autonomy; yet, they may be an excuse for more accountability procedures and external pressures over teachers and school administrators. Finally, echoing the previous section, interpretive research approaches are called to be necessary in order to understand the complexity of these matters. The next set of studies will examine these and new issues from that perspective.

Teachers' Exercise of Curricular Autonomy: Exploring the Construct from Inside

If the first set of studies presented some attempts to conceptualize and operationalize teacher autonomy through the construction of different research scales, and the second group examined different school factors that relate to teacher autonomy in the context of school reform, this segment will scrutinize the actual way teachers exercise
curricular autonomy in different educational contexts. Three pieces of research will present teacher autonomy, additional responsibilities, and external pressure over teaching and learning as a contemporary trend in educational settings around the globe. Additionally, the descriptive approach used in these studies will allow the researchers to delineate different aspects related to curricular autonomy, as well as different constraints that impinge on this process.

**Newell and Holt (1997) on Autonomy and Curriculum Implementation**

Newell and Holt (1997) describe the efforts of a “chairless” English department in developing and implementing a new curriculum in a suburban school in the United States, and how this innovation process relates to teacher autonomy as curricular decision making. Analyses of data, including interviews and classroom observations collected during a whole year, showed that teachers lacked enough guidance and coordination in implementing the new curriculum. They did not count on the support of an instructional leader with enough time and abilities to guide their efforts in exercising curricular autonomy by developing and implementing the new curriculum, and providing students with a coherent plan of studies within the complex interaction of competing educational demands.

As participants in the study reported, one of the teachers in the school had taken on the array of responsibilities of the department chair, but her role was limited to that of a “thing arranger” without real power to make decisions and influence the implementation of the new curriculum. The authors considered that although teacher’s personal beliefs and knowledge may determine how each of them implements the
curriculum, curricular fragmentation was a direct consequence of teachers making independent decisions that did not consider the curriculum guiding principles, while ignoring the content and connection among the different courses in the program as a whole plan.

Newell and Holt’s study evidences the effect that failing to differentiate among teacher autonomy, isolation and independence may have in educational settings. Their study aligns with Anderson (1987) and other scholars and practitioners (e.g. DuFour, 1999) who describe the way teacher autonomy has been interpreted in many schools. According to Anderson:

It is well known that norms exist in schools that promote teacher autonomy and individualism. This means that most teachers cope with everyday teaching tasks... individually, that they are prone not to interfere with the work of colleagues, and that for the most part they guard carefully their right to teach in the ways they think best. (Parish and Arends, 1983, p. 63) (...) Not only do teachers work in self-contained classrooms, but they have little professional contact with other teachers, rarely sharing common planning periods (McLaughlin, Pfeifer, Swanson-Owens, and Yee, 1986). Furthermore, in many schools there tends to be a general lack of agreement among teachers and administrators as to primary goals, policies and procedures (Deal and Celotti, 1977). Policies, even when written, tend to be implemented inconsistently (McLaughlin et al., 1896). (...) [W]e know there are some problems associated with teacher autonomy. (...) [T]hese problems can be relabeled as isolation and stress, disenchantment and alienation, and resistance to meaningful change. (pp. 358-360)

Considering this continuous misinterpretation of autonomy as independence or isolation, different scholars in the field have attempted to clarify these two concepts. For Deci (1995):

Independence means to do for yourself, to not rely on others for personal nourishment and emotional support. Autonomy, in contrast, means to act freely, with a sense of volition and choice. It is thus possible for a person to be
independent and autonomous (i.e., to freely not rely on others), or to be independent and controlled (i.e., to feel forced not to rely on others). (p.89)

Yet, the problems generated when confounding these two terms are magnified in education. According to Contreras (1997), in a reaction for their lack of autonomy from educational policies, teachers try to be independent from students and parents and exclude them from the educational decisions that affect them. This results in teachers’ lack of autonomy from authorities, yet their complete isolation from the educational community.

Other authors have also referred to this issue. For Little (1995) “total independence is not autonomy but autism” (p.178), and cites Allwright (1990) who defined autonomy as “a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence” (as cited in Little, 1995, p. 178). By the same token, Smith (2003) describes the social condition of teaching and autonomy by arguing that “teacher autonomy necessarily involves interdependence, or ‘relatedness’, not just individualism” (p. 7), especially because teachers’ actions must benefit students learning, which necessarily constrains teacher autonomy and makes it interdependent. Finally, DuFour (1999) and Gimeno-Sacristán (2000) present autonomy in equilibrium with teachers’ commitment to the educational project determined in each community, and align with Benson (2000) who stated that from a critical perspective “autonomy is less a matter of shaping one’s own life than of shaping the collective life of the society in which one lives” (p. 114).

Newell and Holt’s study also suggests that teacher autonomy as control over teaching and school functioning can be misleading if the core concept of control is
misinterpreted, for which it is equally essential to clarify this concept. For Bandura (1997) the term “control” refers to the ability to exert influence over things that affect one’s own life in order to obtain or prevent determined results. He sustains that exerting this influence may entail different processes such as “regulating one’s own motivation, thought processes, affective states, and actions, or it may involve changing environmental conditions, depending on what one seeks to manage” (p. 3). With these ideas in mind, and because of the social condition of teaching and learning, the term “control” in the context of teacher autonomy needs to be interpreted as “a question of collective decision-making rather than individual choice” (Benson, 1996, p. 33; See also Benson, 2001).

Besides providing important elements to enrich the discussion about the concept of teacher autonomy, Newell and Holt raise important issues about curricular decision making. They question the extent to which teachers can exercise their own autonomy exclusively based on their beliefs about teaching and learning or their students’ needs, or should better “base their curricular decisions on a sense of obligation to external requirements” (Hawthorne, 1992 as cited in Newell & Holt, 1997, p.20).

Newell and Holt also call the attention about the necessary conditions for teachers to exercise their autonomy. As this research has shown, freedom for decision making does not refer to isolation or delegation of additional work to educators; instead, in order for teachers to exercise autonomy, they require the necessary training, support and professional guidance. Autonomy, interdependence, and assistance go hand in hand and educational policymakers, teachers, and administrators need to acknowledge it.
Otherwise, individual teachers may end up implementing the new curriculum in isolation, with the subsequent negative effects on students' learning.

**Fleming (1998) on Curriculum Autonomy**

In the second study of this series, Fleming (1998) presents a more positive experience about teachers' autonomy in curriculum matters than the previously described by Newell and Holt. This study examined the views held by five second language teachers about to adopt new assessment procedures and standards associated with the Canadian Language Benchmarks across that country. According to the author, while some teachers perceived this innovation as an opportunity for improvement, empowerment, and new challenging responsibilities, others receive it as a new imposition upon their freedom to determine the most appropriate methods for teaching and assessment. Teachers' autonomy in this study was related to teachers' agency (Paris, 1993) and defined as "the degree to which teachers have the desire to make curriculum decisions using personal initiative and intellectual engagement" (p. 20).

Data included classroom observations, a personal survey, curriculum documents, and a set of semi-structured interviews. Aligned with previously discussed domains of teacher autonomy, curriculum decision-making in language teaching was divided into nine different areas in which teachers exercise their autonomy: classroom activities, curriculum guidelines, linguistic elements, teaching materials, needs assessment, assessment of learner proficiency, professional development, relations with other staff, and settlement theme content. Teachers manifested their desire for autonomy in most of those aspects, while control over the selection of materials and activities were
unanimously reported as the most wanted aspect of curriculum autonomy. The teachers also acknowledged the supportive role of curriculum guidelines, yet agreed on defending their autonomy when adapting those parameters to the real needs of their students.

Not surprisingly, opinions varied concerning other themes. In terms of the implementation of the new Canadian Language Benchmarks to assess students' proficiency, some of the teachers said that they should be relieved from this task and would prefer an expert to come to their school and apply the new standards. Teachers declared their lack of time, little training, negative previous experiences, and students' possible negative reactions to the new system as the main barriers for them not to exert their autonomy in this area. To conclude, the author called the attention about the important role that collegial support and professional development have for the successful implementation of school reforms and the need for more research on how teachers exercise their autonomy as part of their daily practice.

This study enriches the discussion on teacher autonomy in different ways. It describes specific domains in which curricular autonomy is exercised by language teachers, thus expanding previous attempts presented by Pearson and Hall (1993) and Friedman (1999) in general education. Additionally, the study discusses the importance of collegial support in educational innovations and the negative effects that environmental factors such as teachers' lack of time, little training, and lack of collegial support may have on teachers' successful implementation of school reforms, something that was sufficiently discussed in Newell and Holt's experience and connected to curricular fragmentation. Finally, the study also introduces the role that professional
development may have for the efficient exercise of teachers' autonomy, an issue that will
be thoroughly presented in the last set of studies.

Bjork (2004) on Curriculum Autonomy in Indonesia

The third piece of empirical research that describes teacher's autonomy and
curricular decision making is presented by Bjork (2004). The author examined the
process of devolving control over the curriculum to teachers and local administrators, and
how they react to the challenge of exercising their professional autonomy in the recently
decentralized educational system of Indonesia. As the author has shown, educational
policies that publicize the decentralization of schools are being widespread all around the
world as part of neoliberal economic theories supported by international organizations
such as the World Bank. These policies stress on the delegation of power from the
national to the local levels and connect local administration of financial, material and
human resources to the efficient management of the state for its insertion in the so-called
"international community."

In this ethnographic study, the author interviewed officials and international
consultants in the central government and immersed himself in the culture of six junior
high public and private schools located in different religious and socio-economic
contexts. Analysis of data showed that although new educational policies emphasized on
the design and implementation of the curriculum at the school level for a better
connection between curricula and students' needs, teachers either rejected their exercise
of autonomy and continued to wait for their superiors to decide what and how to do their
work, or implemented the new proposal without making substantial changes such as modifying their teaching approaches or creating new materials.

Different reasons were described by the author for this to have happened. On the one hand, Indonesian teachers' autonomy had been traditionally relegated to a secondary level as the educational system had been devoted to serve the national cause of the government. In this manner, when teachers were forced to make a decision, they always privileged their duties to the state and tradition to the exercise of their personal decision making skills. Furthermore, because teachers had been considered as civil servants and perceived values such as obedience and conformation to the norms as more important than autonomy, they were not technically prepared or motivationally ready to expend extra time and make the necessary efforts to be creative and exercise their power. In this manner, in a system in which the government had promoted loyalty to the system and obedience, changes that encouraged and expected teachers and administrators to create their own curriculum did not produce the expected immediate results.

On top of all this, central bureaucracy employees were not prepared to manage this complexity and, when orienting professional development activities, they continued to instruct teachers about what to do and did not allow them to create their own knowledge. In other cases, support provided to the teachers was insufficient or even unrelated to what they needed to make this change. Additionally, administrators continued to assess teachers based on the same behavioral checklists used for years, without acknowledging the new skills required in the new paradigm. As the author maintains, what all these negative incidents reflect is that "[d]elegating authority to local
levels required fundamental changes that go against the core values and structures that have anchored the Indonesian school system since its foundation" (p.257).

This experience in Indonesia contrasts with previous theorizing about teachers’ empowerment as a process of devolving control over teachers (Short & Rinehart, 1992; Wilson, 1993). Different scholars describe empowerment in terms of shared decision making, collaborative leadership, or power sharing encouraged when school administrators or leaders in professional development “release the power within people while creating an environment that fosters using their power creatively and collaboratively for good” (Blanchard, Carlos, & Randolph, 1996, as cited in Goyne et al, 1999, p.3). They have emphasized the abilities required to exercise that power, and the role that administrators have in devolving control over teachers. Teacher empowerment has been described in terms of recognizing that the best source of power comes from within the self, being in dispositions to serve others, having the courage to take actions, being able to express ideas and feelings to others, being willing to take risks, being reflective and admitting mistakes, listening to others while engaging in collegial discussions, and relating to others in an open and honest way (Block, 1985, as cited in Wilson, 1993). As evidenced in Bjork’ study, all these new tasks may overwhelm school teachers, especially when they are used to waiting for a superior to tell them what to do and are not prepared to face these new challenges.

Finally, this study confirms that the exercise of teacher autonomy is more than a complex task, especially in those contexts where freedom for decision making is not considered a core value. This piece of research evidences that imposing the western idea
of autonomy on other cultures or people may be a problematic strategy, not only for governments that may want to apply foreign policies on their own educational systems without being prepared to approach the new paradigm, but also for students, teachers, teacher educators, and leaders who may not easily accept these imported ideas imposed on them, or may lack the ability to exert that control (see also Schmenk, 2005).

Summary of Studies on Curricular Autonomy

Some initial conclusions can be reached after having reviewed these three studies on teacher curricular autonomy. On the one hand, teacher curricular autonomy can be subdivided into a number of tasks associated with how teachers construct, interpret, and implement the curriculum in order to attain educational goals. These include the design and development of curriculum guidelines and classroom activities and materials, the initial, formative and summative assessment of students’ performance, and the interrelationship with other staff members for the qualification of teaching. Additionally, these studies make clear that teachers’ exercise or rejection of autonomy in each of these domains is not easily predicted, yet it is determined by a number of factors that may favor or hinder their desire to accept these responsibilities. Issues such as teacher perceived competence to exercise autonomy in a specific endeavor, support from colleagues and administrators, school culture and societal traditions, and the provision or absence of resources for teachers to succeed in these tasks are evaluated by educators before exercising their autonomy. In those cases in which teachers are not provided with other option than accepting new demands without being provided the necessary conditions, they may end up excluding the educational community from their decisions,
misinterpreting curricular guidelines, or implementing new regulations without making substantial changes, contributing to curricular fragmentation, student failure, and school isolation from the society. Educational policy makers and administrators are encouraged to know these realities, so as to perceive teacher empowerment and autonomy as a process, not as an event. Simultaneously, professional development is insinuated as a valuable means to encourage and ease the exercise of teacher autonomy. This will constitute the theme of the coming and last set of studies.

The Enhancement and Exercise of Teacher Autonomy in Professional Development Experiences

Previously mentioned empirical and conceptual papers have included control over professional development as another domain of teacher autonomy, and this section will explore those empirical studies that have devoted much attention to this aspect of the construct. As will be presented, teachers and administrators have engaged in diverse professional development experiences in order to implement or examine educational innovations, improve their professional competence and work, and exercise control over curricular matters, and their own development. These studies will be reviewed in this section after having introduced the concept of teachers or staff professional development.

One of the most recent definitions of professional development is provided by Schibeci and Hickey (2003). According to the authors, professional development refers to “involvement by teachers in a variety of activities related to their diverse roles: as curriculum designers and implementers, as administrators and assessors, and as the connection between schools and community” (p. 120). They draw on McRae et al. (2000) to describe professional development as a “deliberate process designed for the purposes
of teacher post-initial professionally related education and training” (p.120). According to them, professional development can take place as part of formal research or academic programs, non-award programs such as research conferences, and even informal education, which might include different types of activities such as action research, teachers’ study groups, mentoring and coaching as more personalized professional development activities that differ from the traditional large scale and mandatory professional development programs recurrent in the educational field. Professional development, in these terms, would refer in this review to teachers or staff preparation while they are concurrently engaged in the process of teaching, which demarks a clear difference between this type of programs and others such as preservice teacher education.

Professional development activities may take a variety of forms according to an array of factors. They may focus on, or ideally combine, the different dimensions of teaching clearly identified by Hargreaves (1995) as “the technical competence of teaching, the place of moral purpose in teaching, political awareness, acuity, and adeptness among teachers, and teachers’ emotional attachments to and engagement with their work” (p.26). They may also be designed as continuing opportunities for growth or as remedial training for the teachers to learn what they did not happen to master in their preservice formation, or what Huberman and Guskey described as the “growth” vs. “deficit” models of professional development (1995, p. 269). Designers of professional development programs may also understand that teachers’ participation along the process and shared decision making can be essential for their effective growth, while others may consider that decision making should be centrally designed and implemented by experts,
a dichotomy described by the latter scholars as the "individual" versus the "institutional" models of professional development. In the same manner, professional development programs may focus on teachers' acquisition and mastering of concepts and theory, or they can privilege experiential learning through the active engagement of teachers in activities that promote sharing, practicing and integration of theory and practice (Tillema & Imants, 1995). Many other possible types of programs for teachers' development are actually described in the literature (e.g., Sparks & Loucks-Horsley, 1990), yet for the purpose of this paper, an awareness of how these models vary may suffice in order to introduce the type of professional development that is more frequently associated with the enhancement of teacher autonomy.

Seven research reports were found to examine the relationship between teacher autonomy and professional development. In these studies, the general trend is teachers getting involved in endeavors such as action research and collaborative efforts for curricular innovation. These different studies agree on the belief that in order to promote student autonomy, teachers need to develop their own autonomy, which will definitively determine the goals, content, and process of these types of projects. The most distinctive feature of these pieces of research lies on the insider perspective, as many of the authors of the reports have been the actual practitioners participating in the process of enhancing and exercising professional autonomy. These reports will present the importance of teachers controlling their own research agenda, promoting changes in their schools, and analyzing their own process of inquiry. This set of studies will also complement the
previous analyses about teacher autonomy, thus permitting to have a more complete
diagnosis of how it has been researched across countries.

Daoud (1999, 2002) on Autonomy and Teacher-Initiated Action Research

Daoud (1999, 2002) presented a research project in which 23 teachers and
administrators engaged in the collaborative process of improving the teaching and
learning of academic writing of English as a foreign language in Syria. Drawing on
Dickinson (1995), teacher autonomy was defined as an attitude towards learning in which
the teacher is prepared to take responsibility for his/her own learning, critical reflection,
evaluation and decision making. Teachers and administrators engaged in what the author
defined as “teacher-initiated action research” in order to understand and improve
teaching, learning, and the working conditions of the educational community. The project
included a series of interconnected activities such as critical reading of theory and
discussions on new methods on academic writing; workshops on action research; oral
presentations; critical reflection and feedback; and doing and reporting action research.
Data collected for the analysis of teachers’ learning included transcripts of recorded
meetings, feedback questionnaires, interviews and telephone communication, diaries,
participant and classroom observations.

Initial analysis of data demonstrated that teachers developed in a variety of ways.
Teachers became more aware of the theory and practice for the teaching and learning of
academic writing, the need to be innovative as a teacher, and the value of critical
reflection and evaluation for the improvement of teaching. They also increased their
motivation to carry out their teacher research and were more sensitive about the benefits of
collaborative work and peers' evaluations. Additionally, they were more willing to read academic research and showed their enthusiasm about sharing their own findings with others. Nevertheless, further analyses showed the administration exerting an important pressure over teachers for them to engage in the project, which has been discussed by Hargreaves (1992) and other scholars in terms of “contrived collegiality.” The author raised questions about the positive and negative effects that school administrators’ pressure may have on teachers’ engagement in these types of experiences, and how this intromission can initially serve as a necessary push for teachers to initiate their collaborative work.

Daoud’s study represents an important advance in this review. First of all, this is one of the first efforts in integrating professional development and teacher autonomy, and an important reference to understand this relationship. Second, this research endeavor insinuates the positive effects that collaborative teacher initiated action research may have on their professional competence, enhancement of decision making skills and improvement of teaching, highlighting the role of collaboration, experiential learning, decision making, and critical reflection. Finally, it calls the attention about contrived collegiality and the positive or negative effects it may have on teachers’ engagement on research. A similar case will be described in the next study, in which the effects of this initial pressure from the administration, combined with other factors seem to have exerted a negative influence on the teachers.
Usma and Frodden (2003) report on a case study of two public high school teachers, one facilitator, and one research advisor in Colombia. They participated in the collaborative process of designing and implementing a new curriculum for the teaching of English as a foreign language in order to improve students' motivation, autonomy and communicative competence, while enhancing teachers' autonomy. Teacher autonomy was defined in this report as "the human capacity to be in charge of one's own life, including the academic and political fields where we belong" (p. 102), and data included interviews with the participants and other teachers at the school, field notes, classroom and planning meetings observations, and the facilitator's research journal kept during the year devoted to the project.

Based on the analyses, the authors described the three dimensions of teacher professionalism that had been conceptualized by Contreras (1997), namely, professional competence, commitment with the community, and moral obligation, and how these dimensions were differently manifested in every teacher. While one of the teachers was open to the innovation, notably improved her teaching and contributed to qualify the curriculum in the school, the other reacted negatively to the proposal and did not change her beliefs and performance. According to the authors, when a teacher perceives autonomy as isolation, activities such as participating in planning meetings, reaching consensus about content and methodology, and observing and being observed in class can be interpreted as interference with her/his autonomy. On the other hand, when a teacher
understands autonomy as a possibility for decision making, she/he may find professional
development as a means for personal and school improvement.

Besides teachers’ perceptions of autonomy, different factors were found to influence on this endeavor. First of all, the practitioners maintained that the school principal’s pressure over one of the teachers for her to engage in professional development exerted a negative influence on the way she had reacted towards the experience and rejected the new ideas. They also found that teachers’ enhancement and exercise of autonomy were constrained by excessive workload and paper work, lack of time, administrative intrusion in the group meeting agendas, and teachers’ problematic interrelationships. Personal issues that affected participants’ engagement in this project were related to teacher expectations, personality, beliefs, and anomy, defined with Gimeno-Sacristán (2000) as the “lack of initiative to propose something new, to exercise autonomy, which is a personal disorientation characteristic of those who lack goals and who lack motives to carry out projects” (p.125). Finally, the authors discussed autonomy in terms of teachers’ commitment with the community, and questioned the extent to which educators should be completely free to make decisions even when their performance affects the accepted educational project of the community.

Echoing previous reports (Bjork, 2004; Fleming, 1998; Newell & Holt, 1997; Pearson, 1995), this case study also describes different external and internal factors that may constrain teachers’ enhancement and exercise of professional autonomy, including teachers’ beliefs, working conditions, and administrative support. It also joins Newell and Holt’s report in discussing autonomy in terms of teachers’ commitment with their
educational communities. Finally, the study provides further insights on the enhancement of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences, and in contrast to Daoud's findings, it evidenced the negative effects of administrative pressure for teachers to engage in teacher research. As presented in this study, it seems to be clear that if teachers are forced to engage in professional development they may negatively react to this type of activities. However, as the next research reports will illustrate, besides compulsion to engage in professional development, an array of other factors may interact in the way teachers react in these types of endeavors.

Frodden and Picón (2005) on Autonomy and Collaborative Action Research

Frodden and Picón (2005) describe some external constraints that affect teachers' efforts to exercise their autonomy as well. They reported on a case study carried out in Colombia in which they also examined the effects that collaborative and teacher-directed research may have on teachers' professional autonomy. A study group of 5 teachers and one research advisor engaged in the collaborative endeavor of revising the assessment system in one educational institution where English was taught as a foreign language. They proposed changes in the assessment strategies being used by the teachers, tried to engage other teachers in this endeavor, and reflected on their learning. Teacher autonomy was conceptualized as the capacity to evaluate educational policies and make decisions based on the reflective analysis of students' needs and educational goals.

The analysis of teachers' reflections, minutes of the study group meetings, and one of the teacher's research journal showed that collaborative work significantly contributed towards the group members' professional autonomy as they promoted and
implemented curricular improvements and new assessment practices in their courses and among their colleagues. Yet, aligned with the previous study and others reports presented above, the authors identified different constraints that affected teachers in their professional development and exercise of autonomy. These included little support from the administrations materialized as imposition of tasks, intrusion with the teachers’ group meetings, and lack of support for continuity, as well as time constraints, and working instability that notably affected the development and continuity of teachers’ initiative. The authors call the attention about the necessary conditions for teachers to succeed in the exercise of their curricular autonomy and freedom to control their professional development.

These external constraints have also been described in empirical studies related to pedagogy for autonomy and professional development. In a project aimed at teachers’ development of pedagogy for autonomy in their classes, Serrano-Sampedro (1997) lamented teachers’ lack of time that affected the normal development of the study. In the same manner, Vieira (2003) referred to ‘institutional resistance’ (p.233) to change as the main barrier to implement the innovations proposed in the schools when teacher-researchers tried to involve others, share their work with colleagues, or propose structural modifications that challenged conventional routines in the schools. She also found that practitioner research was perceived as less scientific, which, as described by Usma and Frodden (2003), decreases the amount of time teachers can devote to their work and jeopardizes the continuation of this type of professional development and practitioner
research endeavors, phenomena that are also acknowledged by educational researchers in general (Zeichner & Noffke, 2001).

These studies reaffirm the positive effects of teachers’ collaborative efforts in school environment. The authors show that teachers may exert their power when they engage in professional development experiences around curricular issues that affect teaching and learning. Unfortunately, external factors that hinder teachers’ professional development and autonomy seem to be reiterative across contexts, thus diminishing the potential influence that teachers’ initiatives might have on schooling. Awareness about these issues is required in order to attack those issues teachers’ initiated endeavors.

Warfield, Wood, and Lehman (2005) on Autonomy and Teacher Development

Warfield, Wood, and Lehman (2005) account for a research project in which seven elementary teachers of mathematics engaged in professional development activities according to reform recommendations that emphasized on creative problem solving strategies for the development of students’ autonomy. Teacher autonomy was defined in this study as being able to use previous knowledge to make decisions in the classroom instead of being dependent on others such as the textbook, the state tests, or other teachers. For two years, these seven teachers engaged in different types of professional development activities including private and individual, as well as public and collaborative opportunities for learning. In the private and individual type of activities, teachers videotaped their lessons, developed a plan for improvement, and analyzed and reflected on their improvement in a written journal. Teachers also engaged in group discussions about their teaching and pupils’ learning. This process was complemented
with the use of a listserv on which teachers continued their in-class conversations. Data included teachers' instruction, reflection, and beliefs recorded in classroom videotapes, teachers' reflective journals, teachers' listserv messages, teacher interviews, and working session videotapes.

Analysis of the research process showed that all of the teachers adopted new methods of teaching according to the new reform. However, teachers differed in the way they responded to the new proposal. Only three of the teachers engaged in reflective teaching and improved on their ability to promote students' autonomy by allowing their learners to solve problems, exercise critical reasoning, be creative, and listen and question others. The other four teachers continued to teach as they used to, did not promote students' creative thinking, and even interfered with their pupils' development. As teachers, they continued to depend on others, ignored students' needs and skills, and did not reflect on their teaching.

Further analysis of data showed that teachers differed in their perceptions about the value of autonomy in teaching and learning and this had affected the way they had reacted towards professional development, which coincides with Usma and Frodden's study. For instance, while the 'successful' teachers, the ones who implemented the new creative problem-solving method, perceived themselves as enabled to use their knowledge and find solutions connected to students' needs, the teachers who did not learn how to promote student autonomy and use their own, lacked confidence about their ability to make decisions and use their creative thinking to solve their own problems and blamed others, e.g., students, parents, administrators, for what happened in class. As the
authors concluded, teachers respond to professional development in different ways, and a variety of factors may hinder or favor the development of teacher autonomy through professional development. Teachers' beliefs about their own autonomy seem to be one of the most influential factors to be considered. Warfield and colleagues call the attention about the need for more research on internal and external factors that may influence teacher behavior and outcomes in professional development.

A number of scholars have equally examined the personal factors that may hinder or favor the exercise and development of autonomy. From a psychological perspective, Deci (1995) has connected autonomy to the constructs of motivation and self-efficacy providing complementary and alternative explanations to understand these phenomena. Autonomy in his work is defined in terms of acting free from internal or external controls and being authentic. His research has shown that rewards, threats, deadlines, imposed goals, surveillance, and evaluations affect intrinsic motivation and constrain autonomous and authentic behavior when people perceive those procedures as methods to exercise control over their performance. He has found that, in the presence of rewards, competition, or threats, for example, people’s joy and authenticity in doing a certain activity could be diminished and substituted by pressure to succeed.

In the same manner, the author has noticed a close connection of autonomy and motivation with other factors such as individuals’ personality, expectations with a certain activity or place, and the context in which they perform. He illustrated this key point with one example:

Think of a work situation in which two different people work at the same job, with a manager who treats them exactly the same. Their experiences could be,
nonetheless, quite different. One employee could view it as more autonomy supportive while the other views it as more controlling, because these two employees came to the situation with different expectations and sensitivities. The first person might see the setting as one that supports choice, so he or she would use relevant information from the situation in making choices, whereas the other person might react to comments as if they were critical and to requests as if they were demands. The former would act more autonomously while the latter would respond either compliantly or defiantly. (p. 181)

To conclude, the author has contended that people affect their context to obtain the positive or negative prompts that they need, and as a product of this synergistic relationship, contexts end up being modified by the people.

Other factors such as teachers’ sense of efficacy have also been found to influence in the enhancement and exercise of autonomy. Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy (2004) have asserted that when teachers are provided with opportunities to exercise control over their school, their personal and collective sense of efficacy are highly enhanced (see also Deci, 1995). They also claim that internal constraints such as sense of efficacy, and external issues such as freedom for decision making should be regarded as complementary energizers that enhance or hinder people’s intrinsic motivations for decision making and autonomy.

This conceptualization of personal autonomy in combination with external and personal predispositions concurs with Charters’ argumentation in the first study presented in this review. According to this author, teacher autonomy and its constraints can be perceived from an objective or a subjective level (Charters, 1976). While the objective level of teacher autonomy refers to facts that can be observed, including external regulations or pressures that may interfere with teachers’ power for discretion, the subjective level describes teachers’ feelings or emotional responses to those constraints in
every specific situation. As research shows, teachers come to a professional development experience or may face curricular innovation from different points of view, and this will inevitably affect their reactions to this event, for which a separation between the objective and subjective levels of teacher autonomy appears to be required. These issues will be discussed in chapter 3.

Schibeci and Hickey (2003) on Autonomy and Reasons to Engage in Professional Development

In another study that relates teacher autonomy and professional development, Schibeci and Hickey (2003) described the issues that influence teachers' autonomy as decision making to engage or refuse professional development, thus providing further insight to answer the questions posed in the previous piece of research. As some of the previous case studies have shown, there is not a conclusive relationship between contrived participation in professional development and teachers' engagement in and acceptance of educational innovations, as a variety of personal and contextual factors seem to exert a positive or negative influence on the way teachers react to their professional development. For this study, Schibeci and Hickey (2003) interviewed a number of 28 practicing primary teachers from Western Australia about their rational to attend or avoid science related professional development activities.

Analyses of data allowed the authors to group the factors that accounted for why teachers engaged in professional development into eight different categories: compulsion to attend; opportunity due to location; convenience as little disruption of normal after-school routines; enticement in the way of rewards; interest in the topic to be explored; recommendations as suggestions from colleagues; relevance as impact on practice; and
commitment of time and dedication as a product of the professional development experience. As the authors have outlined, compulsion to attend professional development represents only one of those factors to consider when assessing the way teachers react to these endeavors. Issues such the real value teachers perceive in the activity, convenience, commitment of time and dedication, or levels of stress derived from educational innovations can be more influential in teachers' growth and reactions than their voluntarily or compulsory condition to engage in a certain activity. In the same manner, the extent to which teachers perceive a connection between the professional development activity and their real practice can also determine their response. Understanding these issues and how they relate to teacher autonomy may provide further insights about effective professional development.

Webb (2002) on Autonomy and Sources of Power for Curricular Decision Making

If the last five studies had emphasized on the content and process of professional development for teacher autonomy, the last two will focus on the effects these types of experiences may have on their professional life. Webb (2002) examined decision making skills in five elementary school teachers in the state of Washington. Utilizing previous discussions (Lortie, 1975; Maxcy, 1991; Reed, 2000), the author defined teacher autonomy as teacher power or professional discretion to make decisions and adapt educational policies. Data included participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and pages of curricula and assessments used for accountability purposes.

Analyses of these data showed that teachers exercised their autonomy in order to modify curricular and assessment policies and better affect their students, despite the
state accountability system and several district curricular policies. In the same manner, the study showed the important role of professional development experiences in teachers’ power for decision making and adjustments of state and local regulations. Participants reported that their power originated from different sources including professional expertise, previous teacher preparation, and professional development activities experienced in professional organizations and action research endeavors. Along with Berliner (1999) the author of this study argued for the importance of preservice and inservice programs that provide teacher-learners with awareness about the limitations of wide scope policies, and power to exercise professional discretion in adapting external policies to students’ and teachers’ needs. The next study exemplifies one of these programs.

**Lamb and Simpson (2003) on Autonomy and Self-Directed Professional Development**

Lamb and Simpson (2003) present one of those successful academic programs in which teacher-learners are prepared to enhance their autonomy. The authors report on a teacher-learner’s experience with action research carried out as part of an MA course, and discuss the effects of self-directed professional development on the professional development of teachers and exercise of their own autonomy. Drawing on McGrath (2000), teacher autonomy in this study was defined as self-directed professional development as well as freedom from control by others.

Analyses of reflections and discussions between the two authors, Simpson, the teacher-learner, and Lamb, the teacher educator, evidenced that emancipatory teacher research has the potential to favor teachers’ creativity and autonomy by providing them
with opportunities for decision making, depending on “who controls the agenda” (p. 62).

In this case, this particular graduate teacher-learner had the opportunity to engage in action research as part of his master’s course work, which included the process of finding an issue of his own interest, implementing some strategies to improve the situation, and evaluating the effectiveness of that intervention. This allowed him to grow as a teacher-learner, innovate in his teaching, and exercise his creativity in decision making.

The authors emphasize on the stimulating role that external constraints such as educational policies or external control may have on teachers. These limitations to autonomy may serve as inspiring ways that provoke teachers’ creative thinking connected to updated, teacher-constructed, and inquiry-based theories constructed by teachers that debate the existing educational context and exercise their autonomy by proposing improvements in teaching and learning. The authors insist that in order to improve the adverse conditions that affect teachers’ work “it is vital to give teachers opportunities for learning and, in addition, for them to have the capacity and space to build on theoretical knowledge in order to think the unthinkable” (p. 62).

Summary of Studies on Autonomy and Professional Development

In summary, this last set of studies have shown the potential benefits of professional development endeavors on teachers enhancement and exercise of their autonomy and curricular innovation. They have also emphasized on the multiplicity of factors that may determine teachers’ reactions towards professional development. As some of the practitioners described, personal factors such as teachers’ beliefs about teaching, learning, and more specifically, about autonomy, may intertwine with external
constraints such as lack of support from the administration, excessive work load and imposed educational policies, and determine the way teachers exercise their autonomy in the face of educational innovations or challenging situations. These studies have also clarified that there is not a right answer in terms of the type of activities that may better favor teachers’ growth, and have raised awareness about teachers reacting differently in every specific situation based on a number of internal and external constrains and beliefs. What seems to be clear is that a combination of factors should be considered when examining the effects of professional development experiences on teachers’ decision making, and that despite all these challenging situations, collaborative endeavors among teachers and administrators are required in order to affect the educational system of schools. Finally, these teachers and researchers have revealed the important role that practitioner research may play in understanding the variety and multiplicity of issues that interplay in teacher autonomy and education in general, and the imperative need to support collegial and teachers’ directed efforts of inquiry.

Summary of Findings on Teacher Autonomy in This Review

The empirical reports reviewed in this chapter provide important insights about the nature of the construct and current state of research on teacher autonomy. Some papers have placed their attention on the definition and operationalization of the concept, and some in its relationship with school reform, curricular innovation, empowerment, or professional development. Based on this review, and without the purpose of being conclusive about all what is known about this topic, the research reviewed in this paper can be summarized in this manner:
1. Teacher autonomy can be analyzed from two different perspectives; at the subjective level teacher autonomy describes a personal sense of freedom from external interference; as an objective fact it refers to teacher's discretion or capacity to exercise control over school matters despite the influence of external factors that may favor or hinder it (Charters, 1976).

2. Analyses at the subjective level place a special emphasis on teacher's beliefs and how they interact with teacher's sense of autonomy. Personal beliefs include self-efficacy, self worth, motivation, job satisfaction, and status of the profession, and how these dispositions interact with professional knowledge and with different environmental factors to favor or hinder teacher’s perception of autonomy (Bjork, 2004; Charters, 1976; Crawford, 2001; Daoud, 1999; Fleming, 1998; Pearson, 1995; Pearson & Hall, 1993; Schibeci & Hickey, 2003; Short & Rinehart, 1992; Usma & Frodden, 2003; Warfield, Wood, & Lehman, 2005; Wilson, 1993).

3. Analyses at the objective level are more focused on the external factors that favor or hinder teachers' decision making, as well as on the different alternatives for the enhancement of teacher autonomy in different educational contexts (Archbald & Porter, 1994; Bjork, 2004; Chauvin & Ellett, 1993; Daoud, 1999; Forsyth & Danisiewicz, 1985; Friedman, 1999; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Lamb & Simpson, 2003; Newell & Holt, 1997; Reyes, 1989; Schibeci & Hickey, 2003; Usma & Frodden, 2003; Warfield, Wood, & Lehman, 2005; Webb, 2002).

4. Teacher professional autonomy is enhanced when teachers develop their professional competence, awareness about innovative theories and practices, and positive attitudes

5. Teachers enhance their professional autonomy, professional competence and attitudes towards teaching and learning in self-directed professional development experiences or teacher preparation programs that include collaboration, experiential learning, shared decision making, risk taking, and reflection as part of their agendas (Daoud, 1999; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Lamb & Simpson, 2003; Usma & Frodden, 2003; Warfield, Wood, & Lehman, 2005; Webb, 2002).

6. Teachers’ enhancement and exercise of autonomy is constrained by different external and personal factors. These include: excessive paperwork and teaching load (Frodden & Picón, 2005; Pearson, 1995; Usma & Frodden, 2003); stress (Pearson, 1995); dissatisfaction with salary (Pearson, 1995); imposed educational policies, practices and procedures (Bjork, 2004; Usma & Frodden, 2003); external pressures (Crawford, 2001), contrived collegiality (Usma & Frodden, 2003), little collegial support (Newell & Holt, 1997), little administrative support (Bjork, 2004; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Newell & Holt, 1997); teachers’ lack of preparation to deal with new responsibilities (Bjork, 2004; Fleming, 1998), teachers’ negative perceptions of autonomy (Usma & Frodden, 2003; Warfield, Wood, & Lehman, 2005), school culture and societal traditions that do not promote sharing and risk taking (Bjork, 2004); and centralized powered structures (Archbald & Porter, 1994; Bjork, 2004; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Lamb & Simpson, 2003; Reyes, 1989).
7. Teachers exercise their autonomy in four main domains: curricular development, teaching and assessment, school functioning, and teachers professional development. (Friedman, 1999).

8. Teacher autonomy is exercised in these different domains in accordance with the accepted educational project of the school community, in this manner, teacher autonomy differs from teacher isolation, independence, and exclusion of the educational community from decision making (Chauvin & Ellett, 1993; Fleming, 1998; Frodden & Picón, 2005; Newell & Holt, 1997; Usma & Frodden, 2003; Webb, 2002).

9. Teacher autonomy differs from empowerment as well as from professional development. While teacher autonomy refers to teachers’ freedom to exert control over curricular and school functioning matters, teacher empowerment describes the process of power sharing in schools, and professional development refers to a variety of experiences for teachers’ growth and enhancement and exercise of their autonomy (Schibeci & Hickey, 2003; Short & Rinehart, 1992).

10. Descriptive methods that may examine the complex process of enhancing and exercising teacher autonomy in the school are desirable and may complement quantitative measurement existing on the field. (Archbald & Porter, 1994; Chauvin & Ellett, 1993).
CHAPTER 3

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The conceptual and empirical pieces of research reviewed in Chapter 2 demonstrate that the construct of teacher professional autonomy can be studied from a subjective and an objective level of analysis, or based on the examination of the four different domains in which teachers exercise any sort of control. Additionally, this research also supports that professional development may be an effective means for the enhancement of professional autonomy, and clarifies the difference among teacher professional autonomy and other associated terms such as teacher empowerment, teacher motivation, and professional competence. This discussion will elaborate on these issues and their different implications at the practical and empirical level, and will provide a conceptual definition of teacher autonomy that will serve as the bases for a research proposal to be presented in Chapter 4.

The Subjective Level of Analysis: Teacher Sense of Autonomy as a Personal Belief and Internal Constraints

From a subjective point of view, the concept of teacher autonomy is defined as a personal sense of freedom to execute the necessary actions and exert control over school environment. Analyses at this level focus on teacher sense of autonomy and how it is affected by the internal factors or personal constraints in every educational situation. These analyses consider the relationship between teacher sense of autonomy and professional competence, teacher’s confidence, awareness about new theories and practices, perceptions about teacher and student autonomy, happiness with their job, and teacher empowerment.
Findings of Research on Teacher Autonomy as a Personal Belief

Findings on this area show that teacher sense of autonomy varies in different situations, working conditions and educational contexts. For instance, teachers report higher levels of sense for autonomy when the schools where they work or the professional endeavors they have been engaged in provide enough opportunities for decision making and risk taking. Teachers also report a higher sense of autonomy when new educational demands have been complemented with the enhancement of their professional competence and awareness about innovative theories and practices; when they perceive teacher and student autonomy as a significant value in their professional lives; when they feel more satisfied with their job; and even when they possess positive attitudes towards teaching and learning. These finding may explain why teachers report higher sense of autonomy in professional development experiences that include collaboration, experiential learning, shared decision making, risk taking, and reflection as part of their agendas. As concluded in Chapter 2, research on teacher sense of autonomy shows a close connection among teachers’ sense of autonomy, freedom for decision making, professional competence and confidence, teacher motivation, and teacher positive beliefs about teaching and learning.

Implications from Research on Teacher Autonomy as a Personal Belief

These findings have a number of implications at the practical level. It is clear that more decision making does not necessarily imply a higher sense of teacher autonomy, as new responsibilities or wider scope for action have to be complemented with professional competence and support that may drive teachers’ actions. In this process, educational
administrators and policy makers need to acknowledge the complex process of teacher learning and provide the necessary conditions for teachers to succeed in their new responsibilities for the professional development experiences or empowering endeavors to positively affect teachers' feelings and performance. Issues such as sense of competence, job satisfaction, working conditions and teachers' attitudes towards teaching and learning have to be carefully considered when empowering teachers, and enhancing their sense of autonomy.

At the empirical level, the previous findings validate the suggestion that teachers' sense of autonomy should not be examined in isolation but as part of a personal beliefs system (Pajares, 1992). According to this theory, personal beliefs about confidence to affect students' learning (teacher efficacy), nature of knowledge (epistemological beliefs), causes for students' and teachers' behavior (locus of control, attribution, motivation), perceptions of self and feelings of self-worth (self-concept, self-esteem), confidence (self-efficacy), preconceptions about specific subjects or disciplines (the nature of learning a language, for example), and in this case, teacher's sense of autonomy, interplay, filter perceptions about a specific situation, and predispose actions, which at the same time, serve to reinforce or modify original beliefs. This supports the idea of studying teacher sense of autonomy in its interaction with other internal beliefs that combined with professional competence and external constraints finally shape teacher's actual behavior. This provides a valuable framework to examine teacher's sense of autonomy in research studies, and acknowledges the complexity of teacher decision making in each of the different school domains to be described later on in this chapter.
In addition to the previous insights, research findings presented in Chapter 2 corroborate that, despite all these valuable findings provided in this field, further investigations on teacher sense of autonomy as a personal belief need to improve in some aspects. On the one hand, it is essential to investigate the relationship between reported sense of autonomy and teacher's actual decision making in its different domains, and in the presence of different internal and external constraints. This would allow a validation of the research tools existing on the field, which are limited to what teachers report, and would provide a further understanding about the possible mismatch between teachers' perceptions of autonomy and performance due to the influence of internal and external factors that may affect final decision making. This type of analysis would require research designs that might combine qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, and considered different theoretical perspectives related to these phenomena. As presented above, teacher's sense of autonomy, as any other subjective perception, should be examined in interaction with other personal and external factors that determine behavior.

Finally, the empirical reports presented in this work confirms the urgent necessity to build on previous results and contribute to make of teacher autonomy a more solid research construct that may provide strong explanations about teacher decision making. This consolidation would be attained when educational researchers account for previous theorizations, empirical studies, gaps and contradictions and propose new empirical studies to contribute to what is already known. This would require a previous agreement on the description of the construct, a better connection across studies, and a wider diffusion of research reports across subjects and countries.
The Objective Level of Analysis: Teachers' Exercise of Autonomy and External Constraints

From an objective standpoint, teachers' professional autonomy is defined in the literature as the exercise of control over school matters despite the pressing influence of external constraints that may hinder it. From this perspective, although cognitive and psychological types of analyses provide valuable insights about teachers' autonomy and decision making as an internal process, they tend to disregard the political dimension of teaching and schooling. For this reason, analyses at the objective and critical level inescapably examine the diversity of domains in which teachers exert their autonomy and the number of external constraints that impinge upon it in different educational settings. This includes the way teachers are currently faced with a number of tasks traditionally reserved to other school agents, and how this renewing scope for action contrasts with their scant time or resources to execute this additional work, and do it professionally.

Findings of Research on Teachers' Exercise of Autonomy

Research on teacher autonomy at this critical level shows that teachers' engagement in curriculum design, participation in teacher research, implementation of new methods for teaching, involvement in school transformation, and teaching and assessment is being notably affected by a number of external constraints. These include teaching load, lack of time, salary, excessive school paperwork, external pressures, imposed educational policies, contrived collegiality, little collegial and administrative support, and institutional centralized powered structures. These findings confirm the discourse of teacher autonomy as another slogan connected to school reform and
accountability that regularly turns into additional work, deskilling and alienation (Crookes, 1997).

Findings on teachers' exercise of autonomy also account for the proletarianization of teachers described in the last two decades (Contreras, 1997; Smyth, 1995). As presented in Chapter 2, teachers' apparent autonomy to exert control over teaching, curriculum, school functioning, and professional development, is accompanied by an stringent intensification of work that reduces the creative profession of teaching to a daily survival, an involuntarily inability to discern the political implications of educational reforms, and a frustrating incapacity to change the structural conditions in which teachers exercise their deceiving power. Teacher exercise of autonomy is then reduced to an illusory perception of control, while the creative and free essence of teaching is being eroded by imposed educational policies, practices, and procedures that determine what is to be done. Teachers' capacity to affect the educational community and system is being reduced to a forceful routine, while the collective discussion about the purpose of schooling is left to central bureaucracies that create new and more demanding procedures to exert their control, while governing on accordance with their political and economical interests. Research across countries such as Colombia, Spain, and the United States confirm this reality as a global tendency that goes beyond an apparent union speech.

Implications from Research on Teachers' Exercise of Autonomy

All these findings imply a variety of challenges for educational researchers and practitioners. First of all, they recall the attention about reconstructing the real meaning of teacher autonomy as an initial standpoint to reclaim it and defend it. Teachers and
scholars are called to reinforce that teacher autonomy should not be associated with additional work, but with teachers' professional exercise of control in its different domains as an approach for shaping the school that is required in their communities. This implies the examination of the educational policies, institutional structures, educational practices, teachers' working conditions, and other external constraints in their relationship with professional action. This reconstruction of the concept would contribute to make of teacher autonomy a valid common goal for the different school stakeholders, and a meaningful construct to be studied in educational research.

Additionally, these findings reinforce the necessity to improve the conceptual and empirical examination of teacher autonomy by considering a wider variety of theories across particular disciplines in order to account for its complexity. In the specific area of foreign language teaching and learning, for instance, the discussion of teacher autonomy needs to be widely expanded instead of being essentially focused on the connection between teacher and student autonomy, which although constitutes a valuable area of research, has limited the attention to a reduced aspect of the construct. The study of teacher autonomy might include the examination of studies about teacher motivation, empowerment, decision making, and professional development, which may effectively relate to language teachers' concerns.

Finally, and despite the paramount importance of a critical perspective for the analysis of teacher autonomy, this review reinforces the complementary condition of the cognitive, psychological, and critical views of teachers' sense and exercise of autonomy. As stated above, teacher autonomy conforms to a comprehensive concept that includes
different levels, domains and types of constraints, for which a thoughtful analysis of its meaning should necessarily examine these multiple facets. Neglecting to do so would reduce this fascinating area of inquiry to a personal and technical concern completely isolated from the surrounding environment, or would limit it to political quarrels distant from the classroom or the cognitive and psychological complexity of teacher behavior. This review of the literature calls for integrative studies that may acknowledge the complexity of the construct, and reminds the necessity to at least recognize the different implications of choosing a particular stance for analysis (Benson, 2001). Only in this manner, teacher autonomy will consolidate as a valuable tool for further understanding about school reform, professional development, teacher decision making, and students' learning, among many other issues.

Domains of Teacher Autonomy

The research reviewed in this paper supports the value of studying teacher autonomy according to four different domains where teachers exercise any sort of control: teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, and professional development. The analysis of teacher autonomy based on these four domains provide important insights about the different types of responsibilities teachers may have in a school, the professional competence and working conditions they may required in order to perform in each domain, and the different reasons why teachers may decide or not to exert control in every particular ambit of the school. These four domains and their practical and empirical implications will be discussed in this section.
Teaching and Assessment

In terms of the first domain, researchers have examined the extent to which teachers exert control over teaching goals, content, skills, methods, and materials; assessment criteria and methods; time management; procedures for students' behavior; and classroom environment. Research does not provide conclusive findings in terms of the areas in which teachers feel more autonomous or more commonly exert their professional autonomy, but confirms that teachers' autonomy in each of those domains varies and is widely determined by their professional competence and by the presence of centralized curriculum policies or standardized testing that may establish the teaching and assessment purposes, content and methods in each school.

Important to highlight in the research on teacher autonomy at the teaching and assessment domain is the lack of studies that analyze the relationship among teacher enhancement and exercise of autonomy and its effects on students' learning. Research on teacher autonomy still seems to be too much focused on what teachers do and the process of acquiring better strategies to improve their performance, but very little is said about the effects of teachers' exercise of control on students' learning and motivation to pursue their studies. As discussed by a number of scholars in educational research and professional development (e.g. Guskey, 2000, 2002) "the new teacher education is frontally about outcomes, and it is now widely assumed that the sine qua non of good teacher-preparation policies and practices is that they ensure that teachers can ensure pupils' achievement" (Cochran-Smith, 2005, p.9). Further research on teacher autonomy necessarily needs to consider students' learning.
Curriculum Development

The second domain in which teachers exercise their autonomy refers to curriculum development. Research on this matter has examined teachers' proposal, initiation, implementation and evaluation of curricula, which includes the proposal of teaching, learning, and assessment goals, approaches, methods, content, and materials for the whole school or part of it, and the introduction of extra curricular activities to enrich the curriculum. The empirical evidence on this area shows that teachers' engagement with curricular innovations also varies from one teacher to another and is strongly influenced by cultural traditions, teachers' commitment and beliefs about teaching and learning that may affect the way they lead, accept, or reject new instructional ideas. This has called the attention about the important role that collegial and administrative support may have in the successful implementation of curricular improvements for the improvement of teachers' practices and students' learning.

Research on teacher autonomy in curricular matters equally shows that the concept is sometimes misinterpreted by practitioners. As reported in some studies, some teachers have assumed that their teacher autonomy implies their isolation from their educational communities or their exercise of free will without the limits imposed by the act of teaching. They have assumed that their autonomy does not imply a social commitment and responsibility towards the quality of service that they provide, and have rejected the possibility to improve their performance or engage on collaborative efforts of curriculum innovation. For these reasons, some authors have called the importance of a curricular leader who has time, abilities and power to guide teachers' efforts and
guarantee the quality of education provided to students, while defending and keeping the teacher's right to collaboratively define the best educational alternatives in their educational community and exert it in appropriate working conditions.

School Functioning

The third domain in which teachers exercise their autonomy is school functioning, described as teachers' decision making on administrative tasks such as school expenditures, budget planning, school finances, class timetable, curriculum matters for the whole school, and student demographic class-composition. Despite the initial condition of research on this domain, the few studies produced in this area show that teacher autonomy in school functioning is related to teachers' job position, as school administrators report higher levels of autonomy in this type of tasks as compared to the other teachers. Additionally, scholars that are currently examining the so called "Charter Schools" in the United States have shown that although this was a promising alternative of decentralization, teachers and parents are not having a real possibility to define the type of school and education that is more appropriate for their communities, while they are held to be more accountable than teachers in the traditional model. More research is needed in this domain, however.

Professional Development

The fourth domain where teachers exercise their autonomy is professional development or the extent to which they have the opportunity to engage in post-initial professionally related education and training and decide on the content, methods, instructors, and location of their own formation. Research shows that positive effects of
self-directed professional development include the enhancement of professional competence and levels of motivation to generate changes in the school environment. Research in this area also evidences that, despite the positive effects these types of experiences may have on the participants, teachers may accept or reject inservice training for different reasons. These may include relevance of and interest in the topic; compulsion to engage in the inservice training; opportunity due to location; convenience in terms of disruption of normal after-school schedule; rewards; previous experiences with professional development; and the amount of time and dedication as a product of the being engaged in that program. Due to the recurrent emergence and actual relevance of professional development in its relationship with professional autonomy, this issue will be extended in a coming section of this discussion.

Implications of Research on the Four School Domains

As presented in the previous paragraphs, the fact that teacher autonomy varies across the different domains due to internal and external factors has a number of implications at the practical level. It means that if teachers are expected to exert their decision making skills across different domains, they need to be provided the appropriate conditions for this to happen; otherwise, they may end up rejecting new responsibilities or not performing at the expected level when they lack professional competence, are unmotivated to accept new responsibilities, or have adverse working or personal conditions to accept new challenges. As implied from above, teacher autonomy is not an omnipresent attribute of some specific teachers, yet it manifests differently in every teacher, and at the same time, every teacher perceives and exercises his/her professional
autonomy across different domains in a different way. This changing condition has to be acknowledged by administrator and policy makers in order to respect teachers’ area of expertise and interest, and provide appropriate conditions for them to succeed in every particular task.

Finally, this particular finding also entails different implications at the empirical level. It calls for the necessity to examine teacher sense and exercise of autonomy in the four different domains described above in order to avoid biased analyses of teachers’ autonomy supported on partial evaluations of a particular domain. Additionally, because teacher autonomy in each of the four domains may vary according to job position, working stability, and type of school, these demographic aspects need to be considered when defining the teachers to include in a particular study, and deciding on its method. Finally, because teacher motivation, professional competence and personal beliefs influence teachers’ perception and exercise of autonomy in every particular domain, these variables need to be judged in order to understand why and how teacher autonomy varies across domains. These suggestions apply to both quantitative and descriptive studies.

On Professional Development as a Means for Teacher Autonomy

As announced in the previous section, professional development as a means for teacher autonomy represents one of the most recurrent themes across the different studies. In the context of teacher autonomy, professional development has been described in terms of teachers’ participation in an array of activities that include action research, teachers’ study groups, academic conferences, and formal education programs as a means for improvement of their professional competence, knowledge of their communities,
enhancement and exercise of their autonomy, and transformation of their educational realities. Scholars in the fields of professional development and teacher autonomy are inclined towards a careful examination of the different abilities and competences required by inservice teachers to exert control over the four school domains described above, and how the content and process of a certain professional development activity may enhance their professional competence and willingness to succeed, and effects actual decision making.

Findings on Professional Development for Teacher Autonomy

Research on professional development as a means for teacher autonomy has evidenced the positive effects that action research and study groups, among other alternatives of development, may have on teachers’ knowledge, attitudes and actions depending on the content and process of these types of endeavors. In terms of the content, research has shown that professional development experiences may be better received by the teacher-learners and have a stronger influence on their performance when the topic under discussion relates to their concerns and needs. In terms of the process of professional development, different researchers confirm the good effects that teacher-directed research, continuous connection between theory and practice, practical workshops, discussions, continuous feedback, critical reflection, and doing and reporting teacher research may have on teachers’ engagement with professional development and exercise of autonomy. Effective professional development experiences have allowed the participants to increase their awareness about innovative practices, improve their attitudes towards teaching and learning, and use their power to generate changes in their schools.
Unfortunately, research on teacher autonomy has also evidenced the number of personal and external constraints that may affect the school and the teachers, and hinder the positive effects of professional development. As described above in this discussion, personal factors such as teachers' beliefs about teaching and learning, and intrinsic motivation to improve daily practice may determine the way teachers react to professional development. Additionally, problematic environments that do not provide the necessary conditions for teachers to excel in their work may strongly diminish the potential effect of teachers' projects on educational contexts. As evidenced in the body of research presented in this paper, internal and external constraints are also recurrent themes across the different studies on professional development and need to be considered as integrative elements of this type of experiences.

**Implications of Research on Professional Development for Teacher Autonomy**

First of all, the positive and negative evidence on the enhancement of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences provide important insights about the way these type of projects need to be planned and implemented in educational contexts. First of all, these studies indicate that professional development needs to relate to teachers' interests and needs in the four different school domains described above. These domains depict the areas that require more attention in the school and the new teaching, curricular, or administrative challenges that teachers need to address in their development experiences.

Additionally, in terms of the process of professional development, this research shows that these types of experiences need to provide teachers with opportunities to
connect theory and practice and experiment in real school contexts, so teachers may evaluate the applicability of innovative theories in real life situations. These studies also confirm the important role that collegial dialogue and critical reflection may play in the enhancement of teachers' awareness about their learning and improvement of practice, and call the attention about the important role played by the administration in supporting the teachers. In summary, research on professional development for teacher autonomy provides the basic guidelines for the future design and implementation of similar endeavors, alerts about the possible constraints to be encountered, and provides useful models for other groups of teachers to initiate their own learning projects.

Finally, the conceptual and empirical literature on professional development for teacher autonomy confirms the emergence of action research as a valid approach for the improvement of teachers' attitudes, practices, and environment. Action research in its different modalities is not just being presented as a research strategy for teachers to improve their professional competence or attitudes towards teaching; it is also reported as an effective means for the teachers to exercise their autonomy and transform their realities. Additionally, action research is also perceived in this body of research as an effective means for the teachers to show what they are doing across countries, and as an essential source of evidence about teachers' learning that may complement what scholars have done in other type of studies. Reports included in this paper corroborate that action research can be an important source to understand the complex process of developing and exercising teacher autonomy and the different constraints that may affect it.
On the Concept of Teachers’ Professional Autonomy and Other Related Terms

At the empirical and theoretical level, the body of research reported in Chapter 2 also supports the difference among teacher professional autonomy, teacher empowerment, teacher motivation, and professional competence. To begin with, research has shown a clear difference among teacher autonomy, professional competence, and teacher motivation. As a number of scholars reported, teachers may have the freedom to exert control over school matters, yet they may decide not to exert their autonomy either because they may lack the professional competence to succeed or because they may be unmotivated to do it. Conversely, a teacher may not have the professional competence to do a certain job, but may be motivated to exert his/her autonomy and do it as another strategy to develop his/her professional competence. This implies that teacher sense of autonomy, motivation, and competence need to be clearly separated in future definitions and studies. At a subjective level of analysis, while motivation and competence may function as internal factors that may propel or hinder action, teacher’s sense of autonomy must be assumed as the personal perception about the possibility to actually exert control on a particular school domain. Neglecting to separate these three concepts can generate confusion in the researchers and lead to misinterpretation of the construct.

In the same manner, the revision of the literature reported in Chapter 2 allows for a clear definition and separation of two of the most commonly used terms in educational scholarship: teacher autonomy and teacher empowerment. First of all, teacher empowerment describes the process of shared decision making that takes place when school administrators enable the teachers to engage in the collaborative process of
participative leadership for the consolidation of a more democratic and equitable educational system. The focus of attention in teacher empowerment tends to be on the process of shared leadership, on the conditions for teachers and administrators to succeed in this participative endeavor, as well as on the effects that this approach may have on the different members of the school community. Short (1994) and colleagues have perceived teacher empowerment as a big framework or umbrella under which different categories converge, and have included teacher autonomy, shared decision making, professional growth, status, sense of efficacy, and impact as the most important dimensions in this construct.

On the other hand, teachers' professional autonomy can be defined by the reviewer as the perceived and actual possibility and capacity to exercise control over teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, or professional development matters, within the limits of the educational project accepted by the school community and with the participation of the different school stakeholders. This enhancement and exercise of professional autonomy is mediated by the synergistic relationship among internal factors such as teachers' professional knowledge and skills, personal background, and teacher dispositions and beliefs that affect performance; as well as external issues such as educational policies, administrative leadership, teachers' working conditions, and school stakeholders' support that may encourage or hinder teachers' decision making.

To conclude, sharing a number of traits, teacher autonomy and teacher empowerment are connected to the participation of teachers in school matters for the
improvement of students learning and teaching environments. This may explain why these terms are interchangeably used and misused in education, and why they have provoked multiple complications for those more interested in the analysis of any of these concepts from an empirical perspective. Further attempts to scrutinize teacher empowerment and autonomy within the boundaries of a particular area of study, the process of teaching and learning languages, for instance, would certainly provide further and even more applicable insights than the ones presented in this paper. This might hopefully be a provocative thought for further empirical and conceptual research.

Five Assumptions Teachers’ Professional Autonomy Is Not

To conclude this discussion and concurrent with the previous definition of teachers’ professional autonomy, the reviewer will outline five ideas that summarize what this concept and construct is not. The author considers that uncovering distorted meanings given to the concept may improve its theorization and operationalization, and ideally contribute to avoid its misleading use.

1. Teacher autonomy is not independence or isolation. It entails interdependence, responsibility, mutual support, and commitment with the educational community. Perceiving teacher autonomy as isolation justifies educational policies that impose practices of collaborative work, exert control and pressure over teachers’ work, and promote homogenization of teaching and learning based on standardized testing.

2. Teacher autonomy is not additional responsibilities given to teachers as a way to hold them more accountable for their job and reduce the state obligations towards the school communities. Teachers’ autonomy refers to the right for the teacher to exert
initiative considering the needs of school stakeholders and according to the personal and environmental conditions to succeed.

3. Teacher autonomy cannot be explained as a psychological, a technical or a political construct. It involves the combination of personal beliefs, professional knowledge and skills, and environmental factors that interrelate for the successful exercise of professional discretion. Partial analyses that attempt to examine the construct from a single perspective may depict erroneous interpretations of this complex phenomenon.

4. Teacher autonomy is not a static entity that some people posses and others do not. It is a changeable condition that varies across different domains of teachers’ decision making and in accordance with situational, personal, and external constraints.

5. Teacher autonomy does not refer to an absolute state of freedom from constraints. It refers to the responsible exercise of discretion within the limits of school stakeholders’ interest and needs. Theories that defines teacher autonomy in opposition to that one of their students or colleagues, or determine teachers’ professionalism in terms of their unanimous capacity to decide without considering other school stakeholders, may send erroneous messages to the public and justify those imposed standards and practices that this review critiques.

Main Points in this Discussion

To sum up what covered in this discussion, the empirical and conceptual examination of teacher autonomy should not be limited to the cognitive or psychological exploration of teachers’ sense of autonomy or the critical and political examination of external constraints that may impede teachers’ decision making. Teacher autonomy needs
to be studied at a subjective and an objective level in its connection with professional competence, teacher beliefs, and personal and contextual constraints or mediators. Furthermore, the study of teacher autonomy needs to be focused on the different domains in which teachers exercise their control, and the most effective professional development alternatives for the teachers to develop their capacity to act professionally in each of them. Finally, the concept of teacher autonomy needs to be studied in terms of collegial support, interdependence, and as a changeable condition in which teachers perform their different tasks. As a consequence, future studies and conceptualizations on teacher autonomy need to be carried out within the complex and systemic relationship of internal and external factors that mediate teachers' learning, perceptions and actions, have to examine teacher performance beyond the classroom walls, and need to perceive teacher decision making in its connection with school stakeholders interests and needs. These types of studies will provide a better understanding of this complex phenomenon, and will contribute to change erroneous preconceptions abounding in the public.
CHAPTER 4

A FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY OF TEACHER AUTONOMY IN PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

As described at the onset of this review, this paper has attempted to clarify the meaning and empirical study of teacher autonomy within the context of a professional development project the author and other teachers in Colombia have been engaged in during the last two years. Thus, as a practical outcome from this theoretical paper and acknowledging the conceptual and empirical research reviewed, this chapter will provide an initial framework for the examination of teachers’ enhancement and exercise of autonomy in professional development experiences. This chapter will include a short description of the project that originated this review, the main challenges encountered when analyzing the data related to teacher autonomy, and the practical proposal presented by the author in order to overcome those pitfalls in this and other similar endeavors.

Overview of the Project that Originated this Review

The introduction of a new research component in a foreign language teacher education program in Colombia led a group of its practicum advisors to work on their research knowledge, attitudes and skills to do action research. This group of practitioners decided to do a participative and formative evaluation of that research component in the new program in order to improve it, and by doing that evaluation, enhance their professional autonomy, including their attitudes, knowledge, and skills required to do action research and guide their future students based on their own experience. For a space of two years, this group of teachers examined the documentation that supported the new curriculum, revised the syllabi of the courses under evaluation, administered
questionnaires and interviewed students and teachers in the new program, reviewed literature connected to the purpose of the new research component, presented their findings in different academic spaces, and participated in writing and publishing some research articles product of their evaluation.

In order to analyze how these different tasks enhanced their professional autonomy, this group of teachers collected some data and supported their analyses with some theory on teacher autonomy. Data included their own research diaries, self- and peer assessments, weekly meeting minutes, and electronic mails and chats. They based their analyses of teacher autonomy on a tailor-made profile of an autonomous teacher proposed by them after having revised some literature on the field and according to their own needs and concerns as practicum advisors. According to this profile, the autonomous practicum advisor in that program could be studied considering his/her technical and attitudinal preparation, as well as his/her capacity to act self-directedly, establish collegiality, be critical, and be political. Their tentative analyses of data were initially integrated in three big areas: collaborative work and teacher empowerment, direct experience and transference of knowledge, and working conditions and their effects on the development of teacher autonomy (Usma, 2005).

**Conceputal and Empirical Pitfalls Encountered along the Data Analysis**

Yet, despite the apparent cleanness in the process of analyzing the data, the participants encountered a number of difficulties along the process. They found that a number of categories continuously overlapped due to their similarity and the unclear relationship among them. Terms such as professional development and professional
growth appeared to be the same in some cases, while concepts such as teacher empowerment seemed to conflict with the actual meaning of teacher autonomy constructed within the group. The group of practitioners considered that a better understanding of the concept of autonomy and its related terms was required for a more efficient and trustworthy interpretation of the data.

Additionally, the volume of categories encountered continuously overwhelmed the researchers who struggle to capture the best relationship among these new terms. Categories included, but were not limited to, collegiality, respect, leadership, competence, risk taking, perceived efficacy, responsibility, teacher reflection, sense of achievement, shared decision making, empathy, collaboration, awareness, commitment, lack of time, communication pitfalls, and satisfaction. A framework that allowed the researchers to see the relation among categories and their connection with the enhancement and exercise of teacher professional autonomy in professional development projects was paramount. Inspired in Guskey (2000, 2002), the coming section attempts to provide that framework and expedite the data analysis process in this and similar experiences.

The Framework

This section will present a framework for the analysis of teacher autonomy in professional development experiences like the one described above (see Figure 1). By proposing this framework, the author attempts to provide an initial standpoint to perceive the relationship among the different categories that may emerge in this kind of projects. This framework will account for the following aspects discussed in this review: the
subjective level of analysis of autonomy in its connection with internal constraints or mediators for teacher autonomy; the objective level of analysis of autonomy in its relation with the external constraints; the four different domains in which autonomy is exercised and may call the attention about the professional training teachers require; the emergence of professional development experiences as a means for teacher autonomy; and teachers' exercise of autonomy and its effects on students' learning. The five dimensions that compose this framework and will be expanded in what remains of this chapter are these: 1) professional development for teacher autonomy; 2) internal and external constraints or mediators of teacher autonomy; 3) effects of professional development experiences on teachers' learning and motivation; 4) teachers exercise of autonomy and use of new knowledge; and 5) effects of teachers' exercise of autonomy on students' learning.

*Figure 1.* A Systemic View of Professional Development for Teachers' Autonomy
Dimension 1: Professional Development for Teacher Autonomy: Content and Process

The first dimension in the framework refers to the evaluation of the content and process of the professional development project. Analysis of the content will comprise an evaluation of the topics or themes examined along the project, their appropriate level of difficulty, applicability, and relevance according to the participants' actual interests and needs. On the other hand, the evaluation of the process will include the clarity and appropriateness in the way the project was designed; the materials and activities proposed; the role of the leader in facilitating the endeavor; the interaction among the team members; and the way time was managed for the attainment of the targeted goals. In terms of teacher autonomy, this dimension of analysis will allow the researchers to see the type of activities that were carried out along the project as an initial standpoint for the analysis of teachers' enhancement of their autonomy. Issues connected to empowerment within the team including collegial support, shared decision making, access to the information, and enhanced communication will emerge at this level. Also, ideas concerning the type of tasks promoted along the project and how they promoted an integration of theory and practice, collaborative work, risk taking, exchange of points of view, critical reflection, responsibility, and creativity will become known at this moment.

Dimension 2: Constraints and Mediating Factors

The second dimension examines the different personal and external constraints or mediating factors that may exert an influence on teachers' development and enhancement of their professional autonomy. Personal constraints and factors include teacher beliefs about teaching and learning, nature of knowledge, perceptions about specific subjects or
disciplines, locus of control, attribution theories, self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem, motivation, job satisfaction, and status of the profession, or other personal factors such as opportunity to engage in the different tasks due to place of living, after-school schedule as responsibilities male and female teachers have after work, relevance of and interest in the topic, and previous experiences with professional development.

External constraints or factors will include those contextual factors that positively or negatively affect teachers' enhancement and exercise of autonomy. These include educational and organization policies; provision or lack of professional, logistic, technological, and informational resources; respect for teachers' professional development as protection from intrusions or interruptions of teachers' work; administrative and collegial openness to experimentation; collegial support; recognition of success; provision of time; administrative leadership and support in order for teachers to obtain the minimal conditions to succeed in their endeavors; teachers' workload; paper load; salary; external pressures such as imposition of practices or contrived collegiality; centralized curriculums; and assessment and accountability procedures. Analyses of these external factors allow participants in professional development experiences to have a more complete understanding and awareness about those issues that influence their own educational community in order to exercise their autonomy and change those problematic conditions.

Dimension 3: Effects on Teachers' Learning and Motivation

The third dimension, which corresponds to a subjective level of analysis of the experience, refers to the positive or negative effects of professional development at a
cognitive, a psychomotor and an affective level, as well as the effects on teachers' wellbeing. The cognitive level includes teachers' better knowledge of pedagogy, subject matter, students, and the socio-cultural and institutional context (Freeman, 1989); the psychomotor level refers to those skills teachers might have developed including new practices, techniques, methods, and activities acquired along the experience; and the affective level describes the participants' new attitudes, beliefs, and dispositions enhanced throughout the project. These dispositions include motivational issues such as teachers' self efficacy, job satisfaction, commitment with the school, teachers' agency as initiative for decision making, renewal of personal theories and attitudes towards teaching and learning, locus of control about all what happens around the teachers' work, and willingness to exercise autonomy. Teachers' wellbeing refers to the effects professional development may have on teachers' lives including their health, economic, or physical conditions. All these factors will influence teachers' final exercise of their autonomy in the four school domains, thus connecting to the following dimension of analysis.

**Dimension 4: Teachers' Exercise of Professional Autonomy**

If level three referred to knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired by teachers through professional development experiences, number four has to do with the extent to which teachers apply this learning and wellbeing by exercising their autonomy in the particular domain or domains targeted in the project. In this moment, a special attention will be paid to teachers' transference of knowledge, skills and attitudes to their daily practice, and how they exert their professional autonomy to modify their working environment, improve their students' performance, and make of their job a rewarding
experience. A judicious evaluation at this level requires the definition of those indicators that serve as evidence of the effects of professional development on teachers' work. These indicators will be connected to the innovation or challenges faced by teachers before embarking on the experience, complemented with markers of quality and quantity that allow the participants to know the extent to which they have improved the initial situation. In case teachers do not show the expected results, it is necessary to consider the influence of the personal and external constraints described above, and how they may be impeding the successful application of teachers' learning into their daily practice.

Important to highlight in this dimension is the essential necessity for a clear definition of what is meant by teachers' professional autonomy and what is expected from teachers during and after having participated in the professional development experience. As has been continuously reinforced in this paper, teachers' professional autonomy can be defined in different ways, exerted in four different domains, and autonomous teachers can be described in a variety of manners. Neglecting to provide a clear framework about what is expected from teachers may send confusing messages to them and this may derive into feelings of little accomplishment or disappointment. As described in the previous paragraph, an effective evaluation of teachers’ exercise of their autonomy needs to be described in terms of critical indicators of use and quality, as well as quantity levels of accomplishment.

Dimension 5: Effects on Students' Learning and Motivation

The fifth level of analysis describes the effects of professional development and teachers' exercise of their autonomy on students' learning, motivation and wellbeing.
This learning will be evaluated in terms of how teachers’ engagement in decision making may improve the type of formation provided to learners and how this improves students’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is important to remark the complexity of this connection as different factors may interact and influence students’ learning, yet, as Guskey (2000) states:

If professional development experiences are planned with explicit student learning goals in mind, it is much easier to identify procedures for measuring progress and verifying over success. More importantly, clearly articulated student learning goals bring focus and direction to all forms of professional development. (p.208)

Different empirical studies related to autonomy in language learning, especially within the area of “Pedagogy for Autonomy” have described the effects of teachers’ professional development on students’ learning (e.g., Serrano-Sampedro, 1997; Vieira, 1999, 2003), yet these studies have not provided enough information about the whole cycle. This would include a description of the professional development experience (dimension 1); external and internal constraints (dimension 2); teachers’ learning (dimension 3); teachers exercise of autonomy and use of new knowledge (dimension 4); and effects of teacher autonomy on students’ learning (dimension 5). Neglecting to connect teacher autonomy to students’ learning would remove the previous theorization about teachers’ professional autonomy from the challenging pastures of the classroom, and would not transform the concept into a more tangible, pedagogical, and political tool for educators.
An Application of This Framework

In order to clarify how the framework would work with real data, this section will analyze some excerpts of a reflection that was actually produced in the project described above. In this reflection, one of the members of the team is evaluating his/her work throughout the professional development experience and how the different tasks had contributed for the enhancement and exercise of autonomy. After presenting the data and how it was categorized in Figure 2, the reviewer will use the different dimensions to classify the emergent categories.

Figure 2. Excerpts from Data and their Emergent Categories

| I think that as a teacher researcher this project has allowed me to have | Practical knowledge on research |
| better knowledge of the different stages in a research project and have the opportunity to advise other colleagues in doing the different tasks, what implies that I actually need to know what I am going to say in order to not to make mistakes when orienting them or make them feel lost or confused when they see that different tasks overlap or complement each other. | |
| (...) I also feel a higher moral authority to exert leadership within the research group, because I feel that due the good results obtained in this project and all we have learned gives me more confidence and I feel that that my teammates value what I say. I think that hadn't been in this project would have created a gap with my colleagues and I would have not been able to give good ideas to my colleagues. | Teacher confidence |
| (...) About the bad things, I think that this work has implied too much time and this has affected me because I don't have time to do other things at home or rest. I think the majority of times I have to work late at night it is because I have to do something for this project, or because I work in this project during the day, so I have to prepare my classes at night, and all this excessive work sometimes affect my mood or make me feel tired. But fortunately, all the good results we have obtained make me feel attentive about all we have to do, and almost all the time, I enjoy doing this work more than the actual work for my classes. | Collegial dialogue |
| (...) fortunately, we have been able to postpone the deadline for the project because this has given us more time for empowerment, and now all of my colleagues have a better knowledge about the different topics, including the meaning of an educational innovation, the different techniques for data collection and analysis that we used in the project, the communication of findings, the process of writing an article, the validation of findings, and they also know the curriculum much better what will allow them to continue to be leaders in the school. | Excessive work in the project |
| | Teacher tiredness |
| | Teacher intrinsic motivation |
| | Teacher empowerment |
Seven different categories emerged from these excerpts: practical knowledge on research, teacher confidence, collegial dialogue, excessive work in the project, teacher tiredness, teacher intrinsic motivation towards the project, and teacher empowerment. In order to have a better idea about how to group them and understand the relationship among those categories, they may be distributed across the five different dimensions of the framework as follows in Table 1:

Table 1
Classification of Emerging Categories According to the Framework

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Emerging Categories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PD for Teacher Autonomy.</td>
<td>-Excessive work in the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constraints/mediators</td>
<td>-Teacher intrinsic motivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effects on Ts’ learning &amp; motivation</td>
<td>-Practical knowledge on research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Teacher confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Teacher tiredness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ts’ Exercise of autonomy, and use of new knowledge</td>
<td>-Collegial dialogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-Teacher empowerment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The previous example reveals that this framework can be a useful and practical tool to evaluate the enhancement and exercise of teachers’ autonomy in professional development experiences. It might allow the researchers to classify the emergent categories and perceive the different relationships among them in a cyclical way. In the previous case, for instance, it depicts an initial connection between “excessive work in
the project” and “teachers’ tiredness” as a possible effect the design of the project might have had on the teacher-researchers. In the same manner, it allows perceiving an initial relationship among “teacher confidence” as its effects on “teacher empowerment” as a tangible result of teachers’ participation in this endeavor. Additional analysis of more extensive data may provide clearer relationships among the different categories, yet this shorts excerpts of data supports the possible applicability of this proposal. It is important to state that this proposal does not attempt to resolve all the different problems and questions that may arise in the analysis of empirical data, yet may provide an initial instrument to organize a construct such as teacher autonomy. Future uses of this framework may provide further developments of this tool and further applications, such as the design of professional development projects connected to teachers’ enhancement and exercise of their autonomy that take into account the different dimensions of these types of endeavors.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

First of all, the research reviewed in this paper reveals that the concept of teacher autonomy in the field of applied linguistics and educational research can be perceived from two different but not excluding angles. From a subjective point of view, teacher autonomy is defined as a personal sense of freedom to execute the necessary actions and exert control over school environment, which is enhanced or diminished by the interaction among personal beliefs, professional competence and environmental factors that influence teacher's perceptions about his/her power for decision making. From an objective point of view, teacher autonomy refers to teacher's discretion or capacity to exercise control over school matters despite the influence of external factors that may favor or hinder it. External factors include imposed educational policies, adverse working conditions, and little collegial and administrative support.

Second, this literature review clarifies the difference among professional development, teacher empowerment and teacher autonomy. Whereas professional development refers to a number of experiences teachers engage in, among other reasons, to improve their professional competence, attitudes towards teaching and learning, knowledge of their communities, and educational environments; teacher empowerment refers to shared leadership as the process that takes place when teachers and administrators or leaders in professional development endeavors engage in collaborative decision making for the consolidation of a fairer school and educational system and the improvement of the empowered school stakeholders. Finally, teacher autonomy refers to
the exercise of control over school matters, including teaching and assessment, curriculum design, school functioning, and professional development, which is shaped by different personal and environmental factors, and is limited by the educational project of the school community.

Finally, this research concludes that the analysis of professional development projects aimed at the enhancement and exercise of teacher autonomy needs to consider five different dimensions of the same process. These five dimensions are: a description of the content and process of the professional development experience, the internal and external constraints that might have affected teachers work and development; the effects that the content and process of professional development might have had on teachers’ learning, motivation, and wellbeing; the way teachers exercised their autonomy and used their new knowledge in teaching and assessment, curriculum development, school functioning, and professional development; and the effects teachers’ exercise of autonomy might have had on students’ learning, motivation and wellbeing. These five dimensions provide a framework for the analysis of these types of endeavors and a useful model for the design of effective teacher development projects for teacher autonomy.
REFERENCES


Chauvin, S.W., & Ellett, C.D. (1993, November). *Teachers’ professional orientation: An empirical examination of the construct validity using the results of large-scale*


Kane, P.R., & Lauricella, C.J. (2001). Assessing the growth and potential of charter schools. In H.M. Levin (Ed.), *Privatizing education: Can the market deliver choice,*


### APPENDIX A

#### TABLE A1. COMPARISON AMONG EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON TEACHER AUTONOMY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Archbald, D.A, &amp; Porter, A.C. (1994).</td>
<td>-Quantitative -To investigate how state and district curriculum control policies reduce teachers' feelings of professional autonomy and local curriculum discretion, and -To study how teachers' perceptions of diminished control over curriculum decisions resulting from control policies adversely affect their self-efficacy and job satisfaction.</td>
<td>Autonomy as teacher and staff control over classroom content, pedagogy, and assessment.</td>
<td>-Teachers in all conditions of curriculum control reported relatively high degrees of autonomy. -Little evidence to state that curriculum policy constrained teachers' efficacy or job satisfaction. -Direct relationship between level of curriculum centralization and influence of external policies such as tests and guides. -The more centrally controlled is the curriculum, the less participation the staff members have in deciding what is to be taught in their classes. -Ambiguous relationship between teacher autonomy and job satisfaction. -Low level of teachers’ job satisfaction. -Alternative research methods to investigate these issues are required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bjork, C. (2004).</td>
<td>-Ethnography -To explore local responses to educational decentralization reform on Indonesian schools in the 1990s by focusing on a single reform, the Local Content Curriculum (LCC).</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as the exercise of control over curriculum and teaching matters.</td>
<td>-Teachers rejected their exercise of autonomy and continued to wait for their superiors to decide. -Teachers implemented the new proposal without making substantial changes. -For teachers in Indonesia traditional and core values such as obedience and conformation to the norms may be more important than autonomy. -Teachers need to be technically prepared and motivationally ready to exercise their autonomy. -Central bureaucracy employees need to be prepared to manage the complex process of devolving control to teachers and preparing them for that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charters, W.W., Jr. (1976).</td>
<td>-Quantitative -To develop a scale to assess the sense of work autonomy among school teachers</td>
<td>&quot;Sense of autonomy is a psychological construct representing a teacher's beliefs about his or her freedom from external control.&quot;</td>
<td>-Five different domains of teacher' sense of autonomy: 1) Control over the pace of work; 2) Freedom from the pressure of work; 3) Freedom to choose the techniques of work; 4) Freedom to determine the criteria and techniques for assessing student performance; 5) Freedom from surveillance by parents, supervisors, or other teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
Table A1
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chauvin, S.W., &amp; Ellett, C.D. (1993).</td>
<td>Quantitative. -To explore the construct validity of the Attitudes of Professional Autonomy (APA) as a proxy measure of professional orientation</td>
<td>Same as in Forsyth, P.B., &amp; Danisiewicz, T.J. (1985).</td>
<td>-Two-dimensions of professional attitudinal autonomy: 1)Interpersonal Autonomy and 2)Organizational Autonomy. -Measures such as the APA are limited. -Alternative research methods could be desirable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford, J.R. (2001).</td>
<td>Quantitative -To examine the relationship between charter school legislation, accountability, teacher autonomy, and professional decision making for teachers in charter schools in the United States.</td>
<td>Same as in Short, P.M., &amp; Rinehart, J.S. (1992).</td>
<td>-Negative correlation between accountability and autonomy in charter school teachers. -More decision making does not necessarily mean more teacher autonomy, while it may be an excuse for more accountability and external pressures for the teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daoud, S.A. (1999, 2002)</td>
<td>Case study -To foster and enhance self-directed learning in both teachers and learners of English in Syria.</td>
<td>Learner/teacher Autonomy defined as “())an attitude towards learning in which the learner [here both teacher and student] is prepared to take, or does take, responsibility for his [sic] own learning” (Dickinson 1995: 167).</td>
<td>-Teachers became more aware of the theory and practice for the teaching and learning of academic writing, -They were more aware of the need to be innovative -They knew the value of critical reflection and evaluation -They increased their motivation to carry out teacher research and were more sensitive about the benefits of collaborative work and peers’ evaluations. -They were more willing to read academic research and showed their enthusiasm about sharing their own findings with others.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fleming, D. (1998).</td>
<td>Case study - To examine the views held by five adult ESL instructors about their processes of curriculum implementation in a Canadian settlement language program.</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as “the degree to which teachers have the desire to make curriculum decisions using personal initiative and intellectual engagement” (p.20).</td>
<td>Curriculum decision making can be divided into nine categories: 1) Classroom activities; 2) Curriculum guidelines; 3) Linguistic elements; 4) Teaching materials; 5) Needs assessment; 6) Assessment of learner proficiency; 7) Professional development; 8) Relations with other staff; and 9) Settlement theme content. Teachers manifested their desire for autonomy in most of those aspects. Control over the selection of materials and activities was reported as the most wanted aspect of curriculum autonomy. Teachers differed in their opinions about the other categories.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forsyth, P.B., &amp; Danisiewicz, T.J. (1985).</td>
<td>Quantitative - To present a model of professionalization based on the power view of autonomy from clients and autonomy from employing organizations.</td>
<td>Autonomy as “the feeling that the practitioner ought to be allowed to make decisions without external pressures from clients, from others who are not members of his profession, or from his employing organization” (Hall, 1969: 82).</td>
<td>True professions: Medicine and law Client-autonomous semi-professions: Education, engineering, and business Organization-autonomous semi-professions: nursing and social work Mimic profession: Librarianship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedman, I.A. (1999)</td>
<td>Quantitative - To show the limitations of previous instruments such as the SAS and the APA.</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as “freedom to initiate and implement new ideas, programs, or</td>
<td>Four different domains in which teachers exercise their autonomy: Curriculum Development, Student Teaching and Assessment, School Mode of Operating, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author(s) Date</td>
<td>Method and Focus/Questions</td>
<td>Concept of Autonomy</td>
<td>Main Findings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frodden, C., &amp; Picón, E. (2005).</td>
<td>-Case study -How does collaborative action research and collaborative work may enhance teachers’ autonomy? -to what extent does the conformation of a study group favor collaborative work and autonomy when teachers may choose their own research agenda?</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as having the capacity to evaluate educational policies and make decisions based on reflective practices, students’ needs, and educational goals.</td>
<td>-Collaborative inquiry contributed to enhance teacher autonomy as practitioners promoted and implemented curricular improvements and new assessment practices in their courses and among their colleagues. -Different constraints for teacher autonomy were identified: Time constraints, working instability, and little support from the administration (imposition of tasks, intrusion with the teachers’ group meetings, and lack of support for continuity of teachers’ work).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamb, T., &amp; Simpson, M. (2003).</td>
<td>-Case study -To explore the extent to which teachers’ involvement in research can provide them with opportunities for creativity and growth.</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as self-directed professional development and freedom from control by others (McGrath, 2000).</td>
<td>-Teacher research has the potential to favor or hinder teachers’ decision making abilities depending on the extent to which the teachers may decide on the content and process of research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newell, G.E., &amp; Holt, R.A. (1997).</td>
<td>-Case study -To examine the relationship between curriculum implementation, teacher autonomy, and curricular fragmentation.</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as freedom for curricular decision-making.</td>
<td>-Teacher curricular autonomy in implementing a new curriculum is optimized by having an instructional leader, not just a “thing arranger” who has time, abilities, and power to guide teachers’ efforts. -The department as a whole needs to assume responsibility for the quality of the program provided to students. -Subject area departments can be perceived as spaces for discussion, debate, collaborative design and implementation of a sound curriculum, and promotion of teacher creativity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson, L.C., &amp; Hall, B.W. (1993)</td>
<td>Quantitative - To develop and initially validate an instrument for measuring perceptions of teacher autonomy.</td>
<td>Teacher autonomy as &quot;those perceptions that teachers have regarding whether they can control their work environment&quot; (p.173).</td>
<td>- Direct relationship among teacher autonomy, satisfaction with teaching, satisfaction with salary, lighter instructional and paperwork load, lower levels of stress, and positive attitude towards students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reyes, P. (1989)</td>
<td>Quantitative - To examine the relationship among organizational commitment, autonomy in decision making, and job satisfaction between public school teachers and mid-level school administrators.</td>
<td>Organizational autonomy defined as &quot;the amount of authority an individual has to make decisions concerning his/her immediate surroundings&quot; (p.65).</td>
<td>- Secondary teachers expressed higher sense of autonomy than elementary teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table A1**

(Continued)

- Two dimensions of teaching autonomy: 1) General teaching autonomy and 2) Curricular autonomy.
- Direct relationship between teachers' perceptions of autonomy and environmental factors.
- No relationship between teachers' perception of autonomy and gender or previous teacher formation.
- Administrators reported higher levels of happiness with their jobs, as well as more commitment and autonomy for decision making than teachers.
- Administrators from smaller districts reported higher levels of autonomy in decision making than those in large school districts.
- Size of the organization affects the level of commitment in teachers and administrators.
- Reasons for attending or avoiding science related professional development activities may be classified into eight different categories: 1) Compulsion; 2) Opportunity; 3) Convenience; 4) Enticement; 5) Interest; 6) Recommendation; 7) Relevance; and 8) Commitment.

- The extent of independence to which teachers may decide to (Table continues)
### Table A1
(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Short, P.M., &amp; Rinehart, J.S. (1992).</td>
<td>- Quantitative&lt;br&gt;- To develop an instrument to assess school participant empowerment.&lt;br&gt;- To assess several conceptually derived dimensions of empowerment.&lt;br&gt;- To examine the psychometrics and discriminant validity of the instrument developed.</td>
<td>Autonomy as teachers' beliefs that they can control certain aspects of their work life, including scheduling, curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning.</td>
<td>Six dimensions of empowerment: 1) Autonomy; 2) Decision making; 3) Professional growth; 4) Status; 5) Self-efficacy; and 6) Impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usma, J., &amp; Frodden, C. (2003).</td>
<td>- Case study&lt;br&gt;- To examine the development of autonomy for two English teachers through the collaborative redesign and implementation of a new English syllabus in a high school in Colombia.</td>
<td>&quot;the human capacity to be in charge of one's own life, including the academic and political fields where we belong.&quot; (p. 102).</td>
<td>The enhancement and exercise of teacher autonomy was constrained or favored by a series of circumstances: Teachers' perceptions of autonomy; their voluntary or compulsory engagement in professional development; teachers' workload and paper work; time availability; administrators' intrusion in the group meetings agenda; teachers' interrelationship; and teachers' personality, beliefs, expectations and intrinsic motivation to work with other colleagues and improve teaching. &lt;br&gt;- Action research was found to be an effective way to enhance teachers' autonomy in one of the two teachers. &lt;br&gt;- Teachers' autonomy is limited by their responsibility for the quality of service that they provide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s) Date</th>
<th>Method and Focus/Questions</th>
<th>Concept of Autonomy</th>
<th>Main Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
- To investigate teacher learning  
- To design an approach to professional development that enabled teachers to learn to teach mathematics in ways consistent with current recommendations and in which they had opportunities to become self-sustaining, generative learners. | Teacher autonomy as being capable of using previous knowledge “to make decisions about teaching in ways that help children learn rather than relying on others (the textbook, the state tests, teachers of higher grades, etc.) to make decisions for them” (p. 440). | - Teachers differed in the way they responded to the new proposal: Only three of the teachers developed their ability to promote students’ autonomy, and reflected on their teaching. Four teachers continued to teach as they used to, did not promote students creative thinking, continued to depend on others, and did not reflect on their teaching. - Teachers respond to professional development in different ways as a variety of factors may hinder or favor the development of teacher autonomy through professional development. - Further research on this area is required to understand why this happens and how it can be improved. |
| Webb, P.T. (2002). | - Case study  
- To examine teachers’ reasoning about exercising their autonomy. | Teacher autonomy as teacher power or professional discretion to make decisions and adapt educational policies. | - Teachers exercise their autonomy despite the state accountability system and several district curricular policies. - Teachers’ power for decision making comes from professional expertise, previous teacher preparation, participation in professional organizations, and action research |
- To describe validity and reliability qualities of an instrument designed to measure teacher self-empowerment, or teachers’ internal sense of autonomy and their ability to express their autonomy to others. | Teachers’ sense of autonomy or self-empowerment as “an individual’s perceived personal, internal power, and to how the individual expresses his/her autonomy through interactions with others” (p. 729). | - Internal autonomy and externally expressed autonomy can be subdivided into three factors: 1) Teachers having the courage to take risks in saying and doing what they feel is important, 2) Teachers being reflective by admitting their mistakes, and being willing to learn from criticism and from others who have different ideas from themselves, and 3) Teachers having an internal sense of autonomy. |
APPENDIX B

SENSE OF AUTONOMY SCALE (SAS)

For the following items please indicate the extent to which each describes your feelings about your work in this school.

1. On the whole, my students and I can establish the rhythm of daily activities rather than have it determined for us by people or events outside the classroom.
2. Generally speaking, I believe I can pretty well decide my own pace of work as a teacher.
3. Much of the time I feel pressed by the daily schedule.
4. In my present job I feel relatively free to decide how fast to cover instructional material with my students.
5. Curriculum guides exert an uncomfortable influence on what I teach.
6. I sense pressure from the administration concerning how I spend my time during the day.
7. In this school a teacher has to look busy when he is on duty, even when there is nothing urgent to do.
8. I am so tied down to the classroom that I would find it hard to take a short break from the kids, even if I really needed to.
9. Aside from things which lie in my self, there is little that holds me back from doing a good job of teaching.
10. I simply cannot find the time I need in this school to do the kind of teaching I know I am able to do.
11. I feel as though I can pretty well decide what youngsters I will work with in my classroom.
12. I rarely have a chance to use the teaching methods I think work best for me.
13. I feel free to try out new teaching ideas with my classes.
14. Generally speaking, I feel as though the teaching techniques I can use are closely controlled in this school.
15. School funds permitting, I believe I am perfectly free to use whatever instructional materials I think will work with my classes.
16. This school exerts an excessive influence on the discipline measures I can use in the classroom.
17. I would have uneasy feelings if I gave unusually high (or low) grades to my classes, even though I had sound reasons of my own for doing so.
18. I feel I have little say over how the progress of my students is to be judged.
19. I am confident that the principal trusts my judgment when it comes to evaluating class performance of students.
20. I feel that in this school I must abide by someone else’s ideas on how I should grade my own students.
21. This is one school, at least, in which I do not feel as though someone were peering over my shoulder at the way I teach.
22. I feel free to say whatever I wish to my pupils in the classroom.
23. I must constantly be on guard around here against doing or saying the wrong things in my teaching.
24. A lot of the time I have the idea that other teachers want to find out what I am doing in my classroom teaching just so they can judge me.

APPENDIX C

ATTITUDES OF PROFESSIONAL AUTONOMY (APA)

Instructions: The following questions probe your beliefs about the desired relationship between you and your future clients (patients, students) and the organization (institution, firm) in which you will work. You are asked to answer the questions as if you were already practicing your occupational skills and knowledge in an organizational setting (institution or firm).

The alternative answers form a continuum from one extreme at the left to the other extreme at the right. Demonstrate the relative strength of your belief or feeling by filling in one box that comes closest to describing your view of that question.

Remember, answer the questions so that you demonstrate how you would like your relationship with the organization you work in and your clients to be.

Autonomy from client items:
1. I try not to let the feelings and speculations of clients (students, patients) sway me from holding with decisions I believe to be in their best interests.
2. Clients (students, patient) are usually very knowledgeable about professional matters and therefore should participate in decisions made in their regard.
3. Giving clients (students, patients) what they want does not necessarily serve their best interests.
4. Clients (students, patients) often don’t understand the complexity of decisions I make in their best interests.
5. I think my colleagues ought to be more flexible in allowing their clients (students, patients) to participate in decisions made in their regard.
6. In order to serve my clients (students, patients) effectively, it is important that they surrender their judgment to mine.
7. In my relationships with clients (students, patients) I discourage their attempts to dominate the situation.
8. Rather than alter my approach, if a client (students, patients) expresses disapproval of my services, I often recommend he/she seek help elsewhere or try to adjust to my approach.
9. Ultimately my concern is in making technically sound rather than popular decisions about clients (students, patients).
10. I know my work and expect my clients (students, patients) to respect the decisions I make in their regard.
11. I believe independence from client (students, patients) influence is the hallmark of expert service.

Autonomy from organization items:
12. I shouldn’t allow myself to be influenced by the opinions of those colleagues whose ideas do not reflect the thinking of the administration.
13. I believe I should adjust my occupational practice to the administration’s point of view.
14. Typically the administration is better qualified to judge what is best for the client (students, patients) than I am.
15. Personnel who openly criticize the administration of this organization should be encouraged to go elsewhere.
16. This organization should not expect to have my wholehearted loyalty and support.
17. I believe it’s important to put the interests of the organization I work in above everything else.

18. It should be permissible for me to violate an organizational rule if I’m sure that the best interests of the client (students, patients) will be served by doing so.

19. In case of doubt whether a particular occupational practice is better than another, the primary test should be what seems best for the overall reputation of the organization.

20. I should try to put what I judge to be the standards and ideals of my occupation into practice, even if the rules and procedures of this organization discourage it.

21. I believe that administrators and boards of directors (advisers) should facilitate my work rather than direct it.

22. My colleagues and I should try to live up to what we think are the standards of our occupation even if the administration or immediate community doesn’t seem to respect them. (pp. 73-75).

APPENDIX D

SCHOOL PARTICIPANT EMPOWERMENT SCALE (SPES)

Decision making
1. I am given the responsibility to monitor programs.
2. I make decisions about the implementation of new programs in the school.
3. I make decisions about the selection of other teachers for my school.
4. I am involved in school budget decisions.
5. I am given the opportunity to teach other teachers.
6. I can determine my own schedule.
7. Principals, other teachers, and school personnel solicit my advice.
8. I can plan my own schedule.
9. My advice is solicited by others.
10. I have an opportunity to teach other teachers about innovative ideas.

Professional growth
1. I function in a professional environment.
2. I am treated as a professional.
3. I have the opportunity for professional growth.
4. I work at a school where kids come first.
5. I am given the opportunity for continued learning.
6. I have the opportunity to collaborate with other teachers in my school.

Status
1. I believe that I have earned respect.
2. I believe that I am very effective.
3. I have the respect of my colleagues.
4. I have the support and respect of my colleagues.
5. I have a strong knowledge base in the areas in which I teach.
6. I believe that I am good at what I do.

Self-efficacy
1. I believe that I am helping kids become independent learners.
2. I believe that I am empowering students.
3. I feel that I am involved in an important program for children.
4. I see students learn.
5. I believe that I have the opportunity to grow by working daily with students.
6. I perceive that I am making a difference.

Autonomy
1. I have control over daily schedules.
2. I am able to teach as I choose.
3. I have the freedom to make decisions on what is taught.
4. I make decisions about curriculum.

Impact
1. I believe that I have the ability to get things done.
2. I participate in staff development.
3. I believe that I am having an impact.
4. I am a decision maker.
5. I perceive that I have the opportunity to influence others.
6. I perceive that I have an impact on other teachers and students. (p.957).

APPENDIX E

SELF-EMPOWERMENT INDEX (SEI)

Internal Autonomy Items
1. I trust my own perceptions and feelings even if they might be different from how others think and feel.
2. My source of power comes from within myself—-from who I am.
3. I take risks and do what I think needs to be done in my classroom.
4. The best source of authority comes from within myself.
5. I take risks even if I am not sure that others will support my actions.
6. I take risks to do what I think needs to be done in the school.
7. Knowing that I am making a valuable contribution to education is enough reward for me.
8. I am satisfied with the internal feeling of accomplishment of a job well done.
9. It is better to proceed with what I think is right than to wait for directions.

Externally Expressed Autonomy Items
10. I relate to others as equals—-regardless of their role or position.
11. It is easy for me to admit my mistakes to colleagues.
12. I can readily learn from those who seem to think differently than I think.
13. I do not mind being with people who seem to think differently from me.
14. I share my true feelings with colleagues.
15. I don’t mind participating in intense discussions with colleagues.
16. I let students know where they stand and where I stand.
17. It is easy for me to admit my mistakes to school administrator(s).
18. I share my true feeling with the school administrator(s).
19. I do not mind participating in intense discussions with school administrations.
20. Criticism from the school administrator(s) helps me grow.
21. I tell parents exactly what they need to hear.
22. Criticism from colleagues helps me grow.
23. I let teachers know where they stand and where I stand.
24. I am willing to express my feelings even if the results might end in undesirable consequences.
25. I let the school administrator(s) know where they stand and where I stand. (p.734)

APPENDIX F

TEACHER WORK AUTONOMY-AUTONOMY SCALE (TWA)

Student Teaching and Assessment
❖ Teachers establish student achievement evaluation criteria
❖ Teachers determine practical techniques for student progress assessment
❖ Teachers decide on testing and scoring criteria for student achievement assessment procedures
❖ Teachers determine classroom physical environment
❖ Teachers select teaching materials from a known inventory
❖ Teachers decide on classroom work procedures
❖ Teachers determine norms and rules for student classroom behavior
❖ Teachers reward deserving students without the need to get the principal’s consent
❖ Teachers add to or delete teaching subjects from the official curriculum

School Mode of Operating
❖ Teachers make decisions on school expenditures
❖ Teachers make decisions on budget planning
❖ Teachers share responsibility for school finances
❖ Teachers are authorized to spend money on activities such as recreation and leisure
❖ Teachers decide on class timetable policy
❖ Teacher focus groups decide on curriculum matters for the whole school
❖ Teachers decide on student demographic class-composition policy

Staff Development
❖ Teachers decide on the location and timetable for their in-service training courses
❖ Teachers initiate topics for their professional development and in-service training
❖ Teachers decide on general criteria for their professional development
❖ Teachers select subjects for their in-service training sessions based on agreed upon criteria
❖ Teachers determine their own enrichment general education programs
❖ Teachers appoint the instructors for their in-service training and professional development programs

Curriculum Development
❖ Teachers initiate and develop completely new curricula
❖ Teachers initiate and administer new enrichment and cultural activities
❖ Teachers contrive unique topics for the social cultural and general enrichment activities of students
❖ Teachers device new curricula, using new and old elements
❖ Teachers formulate and try out innovative curricula
❖ Teachers introduce new extracurricular items into the school
❖ Teachers introduce changes and modifications into the formal curriculum
❖ Teachers compose new learning materials for their students (pp71-72)

APPENDIX G

TEACHING AUTONOMY SCALE (TAS)

General teaching autonomy
❖ I select the teaching methods and strategies that I use with my students.
❖ I am free to be creative in my teaching approach.
❖ My job does not allow for much discretion on my part.
❖ In my class I have little control over how classroom space is used.
❖ The evaluation and assessment activities used in my class are selected by people other than myself.
❖ I have little say over the scheduling of use of time in my classroom.
❖ The selection of student learning activities in my class is under my control.
❖ I seldom use alternative procedures in my teaching.
❖ The scheduling of use of time in my classroom is under my control.
❖ In my situation, I have only limited latitude in how major problems are resolved.
❖ Standards of behavior in my classroom are set primarily by myself.

Curriculum Autonomy
❖ What I teach in my class is determined for the most part by myself.
❖ The content and skills taught in my class are those that I select.
❖ My teaching focuses on those goals and objectives that I select myself.
❖ The materials that I use in my class are chosen, for the most part, by myself.
❖ In my teaching, I use my own guidelines and procedures.
❖ In my situation, I have little say over the content and skills that are selected for teaching.
❖ I follow my own guidelines on instruction (p.176)


Note: This version has included all the changes suggested by the authors after their analyses.